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BETWEEN GLORY AND DISASTER

The Vanity of Humanism RONALD SAMPSON

Ethics and Social Struggle BARROWS DUNHAM

The Vandal Ideology SCOTT PARADISE

J. H. Plumb *on* The Enlightenment

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LETTERS

Song My in context

Santa Barbara, Calif.

DEAR SIRS: Song My was not an isolated incident. The massacres at Chan Son and Cam He and many others were amply reported by the Western news media. Two years ago at Stockholm and Copenhagen the War Crimes Tribunal sponsored by the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation exhaustively examined the record compiled by Western news sources dealing with our actions in Vietnam. The painstakingly documented massive volume of irrefutable evidence of war crimes, "Against the Crime of Silence," is a horror story.

Had the American public been permitted to be properly informed about our country's actions in Vietnam instead of misled by the con men in the White House, Pentagon and State Department, Song My might not have happened —unless our degradation has reached that of Germany of World War II.

Theodore Schoenman

Boston, Mass.

DEAR SIRS: Such reports as we have received of the massacres of the civilians in Vietnam are indeed atrocious. But we should not allow them, or our justified sorrow and indignation to blind us to the much more important fact that our whole conduct of this war has been atrocious, and indeed that there is no way to wage war against a whole people on their own soil that is not atrocious. . . . It is for this reason more than any other that we should immediately end our murderous meddling in the affairs of the people of Vietnam, and without delay take all our troops out of their country.

John Holt

exiles of conscience

Watertown, N.Y.

DEAR SIRS: Persons wanting to help young draft exiles in Canada who went north in preference to having their bodies shipped to Vietnam may do so by sending cash, money order or checks (on any U.S. bank) to Dr. Charles Forsyth, United Church of Canada, 85 St. Clair Ave. East, Toronto, Canada. Gifts will be distributed according to need in the various cities where these sons and brothers of ours are living. . . .

These so-called "draft dodgers" . . . are logical products of our famous American teaching that one should follow conscience first: for taking this adage seriously we label them felons, unfit to live here, meanwhile boasting of our great-grandfathers who fled from Germany for the same reason.

Many are utterly without funds, disowned by their families, and possessing only the clothing they wear, with the chill Canadian winter setting in. Persons wanting to send parcels as well as cash may obtain mailing directions from the writer of this letter.

Graham R. Hodges
123 South Hamilton Street

correction

Cleveland Heights, Ohio

DEAR SIRS: In my report on the Democratic Party in Ohio [*The Nation*, Dec. 1], I stated that John J. Gilligan failed to wrest the Senatorial nomination from Frank J. Lausche in the primary elections. In fact, Gilligan did win in the primaries, but was then defeated in the general election. I apologize for this slip of memory.

Gene I. Maeroff

EDITORIALS

The Ghost of Geneva

The ghost of the League of Nations has caught up with the United States to condemn the use of tear gas and defoliants in Vietnam. Washington found itself completely isolated when the General Assembly approved a Swedish resolution to declare the use of any chemical agents of warfare "contrary to the generally recognized rules of international law as embodied in the Geneva Protocol of 1925." That Protocol, drafted under the auspices of the League, prohibited "the use in war of asphyxiating, poisonous or other gases and bacteriological methods of warfare." In the forty-four intervening years, it has been ratified by more than eighty countries, including the old and new Chinas, but not by the United States.

Prompted by Congressional murmurs and possibly also by the scheduled UN debate, President Nixon announced with great fanfare on November 25 that he was about to submit the Geneva Protocol to the Senate for ratification. At the same time, he took the significant step of renouncing biological weapons entirely. However, in regard to chemical agents, he stated only that the United States would not be the first to use "lethal" and "incapacitating" chemicals in warfare, a phrasing designed to exclude from his ban the so-called "harassing agents," that is tear gas and defoliants, the main chemicals now being used by the U. S. Army in Vietnam.

A report just prepared by the World Health Organization holds that "no sharp demarcation line can be drawn between harassing agents and other anti-personnel chemical agents because harassing agents may be used in war in conjunction with high explosive, fragmentation or other weapons to increase the lethal effectiveness of the latter." This, in layman's terms, refers to the practice of using tear gas and defoliants to smoke out the enemy from his places of cover, so that he becomes an easy target for more "conventional" weapons. The WHO also warns of possible genetic damage from herbicides.

UN Secretary-General U Thant has been particularly disturbed by the systematic destruction of the Vietnamese countryside, and has taken the unusual step of recommending to the member governments that they "make a clear affirmation that the prohibition contained in the Geneva Protocol applies to the use in war of all chemical, bacteriological and biological agents (including tear gas and other harassing agents), which now exist or which may be developed in the future." The Swedish resolution adopted by the Assembly endorsed this report by the Secretary-General.

American officials tried hard to dissuade Sweden from pressing its proposal, hinting that it would make Senate ratification of the Protocol more difficult. But Stockholm, bitter in its attitude toward American involvement in Vietnam, did not oblige. The Swedish delegation could count on the support of many countries critical of the Vietnamese War in particular and chemical weapons in general. It was backed also by the opinion of statesmen and jurists (some now dead) who had argued at the

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time of the League of Nations in favor of an all-inclusive interpretation of the Geneva Protocol. James Leonard, assistant director of the U. S. Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, answered with some validity that if the Protocol was so clear it was strange that its meaning had been debated well into the 1930s and was being argued over again today.

The most effective assistance to the United States came, however, from those who, like Britain and France, abstained from voting because they questioned the competence of the General Assembly to interpret an international treaty, especially forty-four years after its adoption. Such a precedent, remarked Lord Chalfont half jokingly, might make governments hesitate in the future to sign any international instrument.

The General Assembly resolution has no legally binding effect, and the wrangling over the Geneva Protocol had more political than juridical overtones. Nevertheless, both the vote and the debate have served to remind Washington that the war and its sordid manifestations will never be condoned by the United Nations.

ANNE TUCKERMAN

Southern Gothic

Over the years Congressional grotesques have emerged, the product of the one-party Democratic South, of the seniority system, and of the inbred tendency of irresponsible politicians to press their power to the utmost. One thinks of John Rankin, and of Tom Watson before him. One thinks of Theodore Bilbo and many others. It is a tribute to the vitality of democracy that it has survived such a company of political charlatans and demagogues, though not without severe damage. And though democracy has survived, so have they. The most conspicuous grotesque of our day, second to none among contemporaries and predecessors, is L. Mendel Rivers, Representative from the 1st Congressional District of South Carolina since 1940, and since 1965 chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.

Rivers is regarded by newsmen, and by other Congressmen, as the foremost hawk in the Congress, but in the Song My massacre case he has outdone himself. That he gets away with such antics is largely the fault of the media, printed and electronic. Publicly they treat him with respect, as if he were a normal legislator. What the reporters and commentators say about him privately is something quite different, but that does not perturb Rivers in the slightest. The only columnist who ever took out after him was Drew Pearson; it is a misfortune for the country, and the many decent people in it, that Pearson is dead. What he would have said about Song My, and about Rivers' role in the current probes, would have been vivid.

Rivers is the Pentagon's dearest friend in the House, and the Pentagon reciprocates; but there must be times when the intelligent officers in the services have their doubts about him. He exercises his power with such arrogance that most of his colleagues in the House detest him, although they may also envy him the array of defense installations he has obtained for Charleston. The Navy yard

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was there before he came to Congress, but he has added in his district a Polaris submarine base, a Naval weapons station, an Air Force base, the Parris Island Marine Corps Recruit Depot, a Marine Corps air station, an Army supply depot and two Navy hospitals. Defense industry has followed: a DuPont plant that manufactures nuclear weapons or parts; and, since 1965, Lockheed, McDonnell-Douglas, J. P. Stevens, Avco and General Electric. Rivers' campaign slogan, "Rivers Delivers," is no idle boast. What challenger would stand a chance against an incumbent with such a record?

As far as Rivers is concerned, there was no massacre at Song My—at least that is the view he voiced at the outset. But just in case there was, Rivers has appointed a special subcommittee of tried and true hawks, headed by Rep. F. Edward Hebert (D., La.), who can be relied on not to make too much of any civilian corpses they may stumble upon.

The proceedings of Rivers' committee have been secret, but enough has leaked out to give the public some idea of the testimony. The principal witness has been Chief Warrant Officer Hugh Thompson, the helicopter pilot who received the Distinguished Flying Cross for "voluntary actions" on March 16, 1968, the day of the Song My incident. Apparently Thompson saw women and children being killed, landed his helicopter, aimed his guns at the American soldiers who had been doing the shooting, and moved a number of children to a secure area. A member of the Armed Services Committee said that "there appeared to be an effort by some members of the committee, if not to discredit, then to downgrade Thompson's testimony. But if ever there was a hero in this whole operation it was this man. He was a magnificent witness."

It was James Doyle of the Washington *Star* who dug out the information about Thompson's testimony. As far as the rest of the news media are concerned, Rivers has gotten away with his assertion that the committee turned up nothing of importance. The broader question is how long Rivers' colleagues intend to endure his effrontery. He has been insulting them for a long time—but then Sen. Joe McCarthy was another who ran amok for years but was finally brought to book.

Training for Song My

Paul Avery of the *San Francisco Chronicle* spent three years as a war correspondent in Vietnam. His illustrated story in the December 5 *Chronicle* should interest apologists for the Song My massacre ("isolated incident," etc.).

Avery was accompanying the Marines of B Company, Battalion Landing Team 1/9 on the fifth day of Operation Deckhouse V, a search-and-destroy mission in preparation for deploying a U.S. division in the Mekong Delta. The date was January 10, 1967. The Vietcong, and before them the Vietminh, had held the area for twenty-five years and neither the French nor the South Vietnamese government troops had ever tried to occupy it.

The Marines of B Company were looking for a sniper who had killed two of their men and wounded three others. Avery first witnessed a scene of routine brutality in which a lame old civilian was manhandled. Advancing once more, the Marines heard an explosion and screams up ahead. A sergeant and a lance corporal were staring at a shelter from which a group of women and children were crawling. The children were covered with burns and screaming.

The corporal pointed at the sergeant and said, "This dumb bastard lobbed a willie peter on them."

A willie peter is a white phosphorus grenade. The chemical not only burns but eats into the flesh.

The sergeant glared at the corporal and said he thought there was a VC in there. The corporal called him a liar and said, "You heard the women's voices and the crying baby the same as I did." The sergeant said nothing.

A Navy corpsman began looking for salve to treat the burns. "Like hell," the sergeant said. "We got no time for that. Leave 'em alone and let's find that sniper."

Avery asked the sergeant if he seriously intended to leave the casualties untreated. "That's exactly what I mean," the sergeant said. "Fuck 'em. They're VC too. Around here everybody's VC."

Avery threatened to report the incident and eventually the casualties were helicoptered to the amphibious assault ship *Iwo Jima* in the South China Sea. At the daily press conference on the *Iwo Jima* the next day Avery asked about civilian casualties. The press officer knew nothing. Later Avery found out that two of the children and a woman had died.

The aftermath should especially interest the apologists for American atrocities. The lance corporal who had called the sergeant a liar came to Avery and said, "Maybe it was an accident . . . maybe he didn't hear them." Two weeks later, in Saigon, the U.S. military command issued a summary of the results of Deckhouse V. Twenty-one VC had been killed and seventy-four suspects captured. There was no mention of civilian casualties.

And it was almost three years before the story came to light.

The Nation customarily publishes 48 issues a year, in past years skipping four weeks in July and August. This year, however, only three of the summer issues were dropped, so that the fourth might be omitted during the Christmas-New Year period. Accordingly, the issue which would normally be distributed in the last week of 1969, and dated January 5, 1970, will not appear.

Why New Jersey?

Some time back we ran a story by Fred J. Cook, the least of whose distinctions is that he is a long-time resident of New Jersey. Mr. Cook displayed the pattern of corruption in the state but, although his facts were never challenged, many citizens could hardly believe them. It now appears that, with the conservatism of the good reporter, Cook greatly understated the extent to which large parts of the state have become fiefs of the Mafia.

The current exposures are coming to light because Republicans have succeeded Democrats in the state; but

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lest this give rise to premature hopes of a lasting clean-up, it should be recalled that for a decade or so the state was run by Republicans under Gov. Alfred Driscoll. This gave the Democrats an opportunity to zero in on the Republican tie-up with crime, particularly in Bergen County, and one consequence was the election of Robert Meyner, the country boy from virtuous Warren County, to the governorship. It did not escape notice that the Democrats ousted the Republicans with a suspiciously large campaign fund.

In New Jersey, thus, Democrats use the scandal of crime to drive Republicans from office and, after the lapse of a proper interval, Republicans use the same scourge to oust the Democrats. In neither swing of the pendulum is crime itself much affected. The arcs of righteous indignation are tempered to a continuation of the system, even though such shows of rectitude may serve the limited purpose of preventing vice from taking complete control of the state's affairs.

Two aspects of this on-going crime serial deserve notice. First, a Governor's Committee set up to investigate the Newark riots of 1967 declared that one cause of the riots was the pervasive feeling in the black community that anything and anybody could be fixed at City Hall, that there was no integrity at all in the aspects and functions of municipal government. Is there anyone who, in retrospect, would seriously question this judgment of the black community?

Second, it is impossible to assign a single cause for the deplorable state of affairs in New Jersey. Many causes, of varying degrees of importance, can be discerned. But one, historical in nature, warrants more emphasis than it usually gets. New Jersey was one of the original thirteen states, but as a political entity it makes no sense. Those who live in the crowded northern communities are primarily concerned with what happens in New York. They have moved to New Jersey for its low taxes and because in its communities a commuter may hope to get a quiet night's sleep. Those who live in the southern portion of the state have much the same relationship to Philadelphia. Those who live in between count for little. This separation of economic and political interests may have a good deal to do with New Jersey's inability to meet the modest standards of probity set by the other states.

More on the Panthers

Last week we stated the urgent need for an investigation of recent shoot-outs in which police have again directed murderous gunfire at Black Panthers and their headquarters. A group of black Congressmen will conduct an investigation into the Chicago night attack. At the same time, a number of organizations, including the NAACP, Urban League, Conference of Black Elected Officials, Southern Christian Leadership Conference, the American Civil Liberties Union, have set up a twenty-five-member independent commission to "direct a searching inquiry" into clashes between police and Panthers. Rep. Edward Koch (D., N.Y.) has suggested that the Civil Rights Commission conduct a general inquiry.

No local investigation, as by a grand jury, would be effective. Such a body would not have the confidence of the black community. Moreover, the inquiry must be national, so that it may discover what if any "patterning" the facts disclose. Representative Koch's idea has merit, but an inquiry by the Civil Rights Commission should supplement independent inquiries. The commission has the power of subpoena, and that gives it advantages over privately organized panels. An immediate danger is that a federal grand jury could subpoena relevant documents and records, in the guise of making an investigation, and thereby deny other groups access to them. This threat is implicit in the Justice Department's investigation of the Chicago incident. After a very slow start, the media—rather a section thereof—is now begining to focus attention on the shoot-outs. Until recently, they have been, for the most part, badly reported. The pending investigations, and the general situation, should be kept under close and constant scrutiny if further trouble is to be averted.

By way of justifying their "overkill" tactics, the police invariably cite the Panthers' revolutionary rhetoric and their known arms caches. But not since the gun battles in Dodge City and Tombstone has violent rhetoric been cited as justification for homicides. All sorts of groups use violent rhetoric in this violence-prone society. As to arms, it is a consideration, perhaps, that the Panthers are not an affiliate of the National Rifle Association. If they were, they would probably enjoy immunity from police harassment. The gun market has been booming. In many communities the police have helped train nervous housewives of poor vision in the use of side arms. The Chicago police turned over to the odious General Turner, as a gift of some kind, more arms than they could find in Panther headquarters.

It must be emphasized that the recent incidents have inflamed and unified black opinion from coast to coast. Reports from Chicago, for example, indicate that deep concern over the two killings there has swept the black community. For the first time in years, the entire Negro public in Chicago is aroused and united. Is this what those paragons of social insight, the police, wanted to achieve? A first reaction of the black community in Chicago was the announcement of a dusk-to-dawn curfew, whites being warned to stay out of the neighborhoods. For the moment, the curfew has been lifted but an explosive situation exists and it will not be easily corrected. Police guns, not Panther guns, have won for the black militants the largest measure of support they have yet achieved. So let's have the facts, all of them, including the treatment the twenty Panthers arrested months ago in New York, are receiving from the authorities.

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BETWEEN GLORY AND DISASTER

The Nation usually devotes its final issue of the year to subject matter of a more reflective cast than its normal weekly fare. Of recent years these issues have been concerned, in one way or another, with human values in an age of science and technology. That is not surprising; the issue is central to our times. This year the winter solstice seemed a particularly good time, as Barrows Dunham points out, to see if one can "find a side"—a position—"that is hitched to a star." For we are indeed "between glory and disaster," living "as in a house defiled and rotting, where there can be no repair without damage. Yet it is the only house we have."

"Relevance" has been the chic word of 1969, but relevance is a relative term. Behind every discussion of the term there lurks a question, "relevant to what?" The question is seldom asked, and when it is the discussion soon ends in vague references to past values. Relevant to the inherited Western cultural tradition? Relevant to the Judeo-Christian tradition? Relevant to what? The answer eludes us. At this year's meeting of Nobel laureates in Stockholm, assembled to discuss "The Place of Value in a World of Facts," Jacques Monod struck a note that echoed throughout the sessions. No value system exists today either to guide the promise of science or to forestall the menace of science. And without it, Monod declared, no society can long survive in today's world. At present, we are rushing along, as he put it, with a value system inherited from the 18th century. Since we have no other, we give it lip service; no one really believes in an ethic so dated. Under the pressure of science the rate of social change, Kenneth Keniston has written, "will increase up to the as yet untested limits of human adaptability." Unlike moral codes, ethical systems must be constantly reconsidered if they are to be "relevant" guides to behavior in a rapidly changing world. Today, of course, the need is for an ethic, to quote Keniston again, "that makes central the preservation and unfolding of human life and that defines 'man' as any citizen of this expanding globe." That ethic is not implicit in the technological revolution; it will be created, if it is, by man in his roles of citizen and seer. Science cannot save us from ourselves.

The problem has the utmost urgency because the issue is now survival. In seeking a basis for the ethic we must invent, we should be prepared, as Dr. George Salzman said in a memorable October 15 moratorium address at the University of Massachusetts (Boston), "to re-examine all our institutions, all our codes of behavior, all our scales of values, and if need be, to alter or discard those that would block our way to the future." Society can proceed no further "if men are expected to live on two distinct planes of morality—as decent, moral human beings in their private lives, and as manipulators of power and greed, acting deceitfully and without compunction in their external affairs. . . . The affairs of the world are [now] a single vast intertwined web."

The contributions that follow explore a few—if only a few—of the implications that flow from the ethic vacuum in which we find ourselves.

THE VANITY OF HUMANISM

RONALD SAMPSON
Mr. Sampson is a lecturer in politics at the University of Bristol. His most recent book is The Psychology of Power *(Pantheon).*

Susan Stebbing wrote in 1941: "But it is also no illusion but uncontested fact that here and now we know that hatred, cruelty, intolerance and indifference to human misery are evil; that love, kindliness, tolerance, forgiveness and truth are good, so unquestionably good that we do not need God or heaven to assure us of their worth." When I first read this, it struck a responsive chord; I remember quoting it with approval a decade ago. Virtue, I felt, was self-evident, beyond the possibility of sincere disputation; moreover, this was all that was truly important: that we should get on with the business of doing what we so clearly knew. For if our lives were loving and honorable, if we were kind, tolerant, forgiving and truthful, there would be no problems of an urgent or serious kind.

Moreover, so it then seemed to me—it was not merely that morality was self-sufficient and that discussion of the nature or existence of God was unnecessary. Theological discussion was positively harmful. It was precisely when men began to dispute about the nature of God that they showed their worst qualities, and for good reason. Men become most bitter and intolerant at the point where the touchstone of evidence, to which appeal can be made, breaks down. In the absence of evidence the will to self-assertion, the desire to subjugate one's opponent, find free rein. "God" is such a nebulous, unverifiable concept, meaning all things to all men, I thought, that it is bound to be a bone of inexhaustible contention. In morals, the appeal to universal experience offers itself as an inescapable arbiter; in theology, on the other hand, there is no such arbiter, and so it is not surprising that religion brings out the worst in man.

Consider the record of man's search for God. All history indicates not only that there are apparently no limits to what men will worship under this label but also that men have committed and still commit some of their more atrocious crimes in pursuit of their worship and in their intolerance of other men's differing concepts of what is appropriate or required of them in matters of a religious nature. And among wars it is notorious that none is more

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calculated to bring out new depths of cruelty than the religious war.

Nor is it simply that religious belief has been intimately associated with fear, superstition and irrationality, spawning innumerable mystical cults and rituals to act as magnets for fanaticism and ignorance. Religion is also intimately associated with the apparatus of political domination and economic exploitation. When reason and persuasion fail of their purpose, the temptation is immediate to seek to buttress one's unacknowledged or weak authority by appealing to divine command. Countless rulers have sought to validate their authority by asserting a divine right, and have tried to make the claim credible through ritual and pomp associated with such hallowed symbols as scepter, miter and orb. After World War I, men began to recognize the full price of this folklore, and their bitterness found expression in sardonically humorous verse:

> God save the king. Gott strafe England,
> God this, God that and God the other thing.
> Good God! said God, I've got my work cut out.

Even in the age of Cromwell, some among the radical Puritans were aware of the sociological function of religion as the "opium of the people." The bare bones of Marx's argument two centuries later are found in Gerrard Winstanley's *The Law of Freedom in a Platform or True Magistracy Restored* (1652):

> The elder brother replies, What, will you be an Atheist, and a factious man, will you not believe God?
>
> Yes, saith the younger brother, if I knew God said so I should believe, for I desire to serve him.
>
> Why, saith the elder brother, this is his word, and if you will not believe it, you must be damned; but if you will believe it, you must go to Heaven.
>
> Well, the younger brother being weak in spirit, and having not a grounded knowledge of the Creation, nor of himself, is terrified, and lets go his hold in the Earth, and submits himself to be a slave to his brother . . . and so his eyes are put out, and his Reason is blinded.

In our time the major emphasis has probably been focused on the psychology of religion. Stimulated by psychoanalytic theories, men have been increasingly inclined to construe God as a projection of fears, need for consolation, inability to look the unknown unflinchingly in the face, failure to achieve emotional autonomy from parental control and consequent need for an eternal Father. Common to Marxist theories of alienation and Freudian psychoanalysis is the reduction of God to the status of a morbid symbol of man's immaturity as an exploited worker or as a possessed and dominated son. In philosophy, molded largely by the 20th-century reverence for science, concern has been with precision and clarity of linguistic usage. Tests of meaning of the most rigorous nature, acceptable to the scientist, were devised. If a statement were neither a definition nor verifiable by appeal to any possible sense experience, it was held to be meaningless. Under attack, minor concessions were made to avoid manifest absurdity, but only to safeguard the purity of the central positivist principle. If God is to pass such a test before being admitted to the status of meaningful concepts, the onus is on the believer to supply evidence of God's transcendent reality. What evidence of a falsifiable nature can be adduced to prove that man is not alone in the universe, that God would still exist if the human species were to perish? In this way the whole 19th-century debate between immanentists and transcendentalists has been neatly headed off.

The theologians themselves have long been in full retreat before the positivist onslaught, bringing their teachings up to date, rethinking, rationalizing, salvaging what crumbs they could, or even—on the notorious principle that if you cannot beat your opponent, join him—producing ultra-sophistications of their own about what they are pleased to call the death of God. In short, the twin streams of the European Enlightenment, the liberal empiricist stream and the dialectical materialist stream, have united in an immensely powerful river to wash away the last remnants of man's traditional beliefs about the existence and nature of God. Since, however, most of us recognize that man cannot live without some guiding metaphysic, a new "religion," Humanism, is rapidly being evolved in the West and appears to be growing increasingly fashionable. The essential argument is admittedly persuasive and is implicit in the preceding analysis. Since the evidence is overwhelming that nothing is more difficult to secure than agreement among men concerning the nature of *reality,* and since it is a matter of urgency to secure some measure of agreement about the nature of *morality,* where common yardsticks of appeal are potentially within reach, let us put the religious debate into cold storage, if it is not possible to get rid of it altogether, so that we can get on with the practical and urgent business of hammering out an agreed morality. To hope that Christians and Marxists, for example, might one day agree upon the nature of reality or the nature of God, is obviously futile and in any case unnecessary. But since they do share common problems, it is urgent and far from utopian that we should begin to try to establish mutual understanding about problems of conduct in the interests of harmony and peace. Let us agree to avoid the *odium theologicum* and settle for concord about important matters like peace, security and productivity. Ronald Fletcher, professor of sociology at the University of York writes:

> If morality is to wait upon agreement about religious or metaphysical matters then men are in a serious plight indeed, for every religion and ideology in the world differs on these matters, and very radically. Men are everywhere faced, however, with common economic, social, political problems, and are involved—from the personal, right up to the international, level—in issues of reciprocal obligation.

Ethics is an autonomous discipline, he states, and therefore asks rhetorically: "Who is right about 'reality' is a question which can surely wait?" What could sound more reasonable?

It is the purpose of this essay to deny this thesis, to argue that Humanism, be it agnostic or atheistic, is a false religion, that men *are* "in a serious plight indeed," that this plight has arisen ultimately from false religious belief, that the liberation from false metaphysics only to fall into new forms of error will not alleviate our existing

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grave situation, but will on the contrary produce even more deadly consequences; that morality is not an autonomous discipline, that the argument about the nature of reality is fundamental, that error about the nature and purpose of God must necessarily lead to avoidable suffering and death, and that the metaphysical debate, so far from being a luxury to be postponed indefinitely, is the most urgent task, now more than ever, confronting men.

That men have worshipped false gods is abundantly evident; the targets against which Marx and Freud launched their arrows were shrewdly chosen. But the fact that men in their blindness have conceived an infinitude of false gods, does not entitle us to infer that therefore God does not exist. That is as though we were to infer from the innumerable instances of men's false reasoning that man is incapable of distinguishing truth from falsehood. Let us return to the original quotation from Susan Stebbing and ask why, notwithstanding the fact that the distinction between good and evil is self-evident, men after millennia of struggle show as yet but faint signs of overcoming evil. We know here and now indisputably that "hatred, cruelty, intolerance and indifference to human misery are evil. . . ." Had Dr. Stebbing stopped there, none could gainsay her. But we must ask why, given this knowledge, we *appear* to be incapable of acting upon it. Is it that this knowledge has come to us only recently, that we have not had sufficient time to gird our loins? Clearly not. "War of any kind is evil," wrote Herodotus a very long time ago. But we wage it today with apparently undiminished zest. Sexual immorality and depravity also lead to great evil, but when theologians discuss morality solely in the context of sexual relations and to the exclusion of war, we rightly feel that there is something odd—that they are being less than honest to us, let alone to God.

Of the very many ills which afflict humanity one evil dwarfs all the others. Throughout human history men have lived in organized groups under governments which have feared and competed with one another by means of arms, and the resultant arms races have erupted at more or less regular intervals into wars. The present arms race is consuming $183 billion a year, and it is beyond the power of any human imagination to foresee the extent of the holocaust which will ensue if it continues until it erupts into war. In the childhood of our species it was no doubt possible to delude men that evil occurred because the gods were angry or because exceptionally wicked men held sway; but it is no longer possible to deceive in this way. Today, men know that when very great evil threatens to overtake them, it is and can only be because very large numbers of men are contributing their share to that evil, that is to say, are living their lives on a false and evil basis. And this, notwithstanding that we all know, indeed cannot *not* know, that "love, kindliness, tolerance, forgiveness and truth are good . . . unquestionably good." So where is all the evil coming from?

At this point I find it difficult not to resort to the first person singular, not because the evidence is in any way private or less than general but because it is more likely to touch the imagination when translated into the idiom in which we as individuals experience it. In my childhood it was the practice in my part of the world for children to go to day school on weekdays and to Sunday school on Sunday. It was in the latter school that I was first exposed to the four Gospels of the New Testament, and they immediately reached into my profoundest emotions—not the absurd and manifestly false tales about people rising physically from the dead, walking on the water and conjuring water into wine, but stories such as that of the woman taken in adultery, the good Samaritan, the prodigal son, and the lucid, yet poetic simplicity of the Beatitudes. But although these readings, repeated many times, were to make an ineffaceable impression, another and different lesson was also taught me, one that was the more powerful because it was never openly expressed. I noticed that while I was required to attend Sunday school and while interest was expressed if I received a prize for attendance or diligence in memorizing required lessons, the interest was nevertheless essentially polite. But the interest shown by everyone in my circle to success achieved in lessons and examinations at the day school was of the genuine variety which quickened the pulse.

In short, I learned that "religion" played in life some part that was never made plain beyond the fact that it was peripheral and wrapped around with much that was evidently irrational—dogma, miracle and ritual which inspired not respect but contempt. On the other hand, I learned that to make a successful career, that is to say, to "get on" in the world, was a matter of central and enduring importance, commanding the immediate and genuine respect of everyone I knew. That there might ever be a conflict between these two planes of experience never seriously occurred to me. That there had been such conflicts in history, I was of course aware, but that was on the public stage and in the past, and clearly had nothing to do with my own private, personal existence. The real purpose of life was to be successful, as the world and I measured success. As for virtue, that was something which largely took care of itself; one did as one's neighbor did and as professional standards required, and no one could pretend that such requirements were especially onerous. I knew, of course, that injustice and inequality existed in the world, and that this was wrong; but my obligations in that respect were wholly covered by my tacit membership in and support of the reformist party, which was working, admittedly slowly but nevertheless steadily—Rome was not built in a day—to set matters right. So I had been sedulously taught, and so I believed.

It is not necessary here to describe the gradual and painful process whereby I awoke from this dream. Everyone of my generation knows how the organized parties of reform not only betrayed their "principles" but themselves became active agents in the commiting of atrocity and crime. And as the wars and the famines, the arms race and irresponsible technology, the hangings and assassinations continued, it became more and more evident that the dissidents, the protesters, "the stage army of the good," who were called upon to protest again and again, with enduring stamina, were not drawn at random from all levels of society. They were drawn always from the ranks of the "powerless," the people who had no positions of authority

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to jeopardize or lose. Those who consistently sought allies against recurring wrong and injustice quickly learned that the reservoir of potential support shrank visibly as one ascended the hierarchy of prestige and power. It would be useful to get X's signature; it would carry a lot of weight, we fondly imagined. But we soon discovered that X's signature was not to be had. Privately he might well be with us, but we must appreciate that for a person in his position, well . . . we did understand, didn't we? So we had to make do with poor old Z's signature, which allegedly carried little or no weight, but which was always to be relied upon.

One other facet of my experience also sharply impressed me. Although great and growing evil occurred in the world, yet, wherever I moved in society, be it among teachers, soldiers, churchmen, criminals, housewives, policemen, workmen, politicians, foreigners, doctors, I never met anyone who struck me as essentially an evil man. Men who were weak and pompous, who dissembled and were evasive, who were self-important, vain and ambitious, who were self-contradictory, self-deceiving, unreliable, acquisitive, these I met in plenty at every level of society; but nowhere was it my misfortune to find an unmistakably evil man. So evil occurred in the world, very great and unbelievable evil, and yet there were no evil men, it appeared. Whenever we sought support to protest against an evil, it was very rare indeed to find anyone who wished to identify himself, least of all publicly, with the evil in question. To be sure, halfhearted attempts at casuistry would sometimes be made, but these would soon fade under the pressure of honest logic. Nevertheless, it was not easy to enlist support against the evil from people of "influence" in the community. For people of influence and position, of power or wealth, had their positions and their power to lose, whereas those unencumbered by such positions were more free to listen to the voice of conscience within. Or, to put the matter the other way round, if a man were consistently to heed and act upon the voice of conscience, he would inevitably be required to pay a price in the shape of growing ineligibility for promotion to positions of authority, increased emolument and "influence."

Cassianus

Conversion of St. Paul

In short, a clash, a conflict, a dilemma was inherent in the logic of things, and it was inescapable that every man had to choose. He could choose to aspire toward fortune or preferment, a successful career, high status, position; or he could listen consistently to and try to act upon the voice of conscience which urged him to protest against the injustice of the world. But what he could not have—as I had so fondly hoped to be the case—was both. A man could not have both power over others and genuine love for others. And while it was obvious which one should choose, it was unfortunately by no means easy to make the right choice, as was attested both by my own backsliding and by the large number of those who were unwilling because of their positions, actual or hoped for, to oppose publicly the evils which they would repudiate privately.

In brief I had learned the ancient lesson that, while all human beings are more than adequately equipped to distinguish good from evil, nevertheless a price is to be paid for choosing the good rather than the evil. There is a reward, too, of course, in the shape of a tranquil conscience and the serenity of spirit that is alone born of a tranquil conscience; but most human beings appear to be more immediately impressed by the nature of the sacrifice than by the reality of the reward, for the former is tangible and the latter is not. And any discussion of the autonomy of ethics which fails to take this dilemma for mortal man adequately into account must be condemned as facile and not very helpful. It is not enough to know that kindliness is good and cruelty is bad. It is also necessary to be able to answer correctly the question: why am I alive and what is the purpose of this life that has been temporarily entrusted to me?

Every man must be bound by some conviction, conscious or unconscious, about the significance he attaches to his life in order to live it, to direct it, to make plans or merely to drift. Whatever a man may say, his behavior over a prolonged period will under close study inevitably reveal the real values sustaining it. And this metaphysic is the most important thing that we must know of a man if we need to assess his basic character or to predict how he

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will act in a given situation. Since every man is endowed with very powerful appetites, it is perfectly possible to find the meaning of one's life in a ceaseless pursuit of gratification. In practice, most of us are in varying degree aware both that appetites ceaselessly pampered are apt to cloy and that unrestrained egoism on the part of large numbers of individuals is calculated to bring about conditions of misery and discomfort to all concerned. Therefore a policy of unrelieved individualism is generally tempered to some degree by a further extension of this principle. That is to say, the individual finds the meaning of his life not solely in self-indulgence but also in satisfying the wants of a group or groups with which he identifies emotionally. The most universal form of ego identification with a group is of course with the family, but the principle extends in a lesser degree to schools, villages, social classes, religious and ethnic groups and political nationalities.

The difficulty with all these "goods" sought for oneself or one's group is that they are particularistic or exclusive; they displace a like good for somebody else or some other group. They are not compatible with the principle of universalism and therefore violate the principle of justice. They stimulate competition; they are keenly sought just because they confer privilege or special status; they differentiate favorably the successful from those who fail. They are therefore of the very stuff of strife, of envy, of the struggle for power, of the resentments of inferiority, of the war of all against all.

Unfortunately, the energies which are harnessed to these secular goals are very powerful, and sustain the central efforts of a man's striving and struggle over a lifetime. If they are rejected as having morally indefensible consequences to mankind as a whole, inevitably an immense problem makes itself felt. To what is a man to devote his energies? What shall be the central goal of his life? If he ceases to find it in the quest for power, privilege, status, "authority," wealth, what substitute is there that *is* morally acceptable and which can realistically evoke a comparable single-mindedness and consistently sustained application of energy? In whatever way we seek to answer this question, one thing is certain: the first step consists in renouncing what have hithertto been powerfully felt desires, animating the individual's main aspirations and life goals. And such a task is calculated to daunt even strong people. Resistance cannot but be profound, as St. Augustine testified with a disarming candor and wry humor:

> And when Thou didst on all sides shew me, that what Thou saidst was true, I, convicted by the truth, had nothing at all to answer but only those dull and drowsy words, "Anon, anon," "presently"; "leave me but a little." But "presently, presently" had no present, and my "little while" went on for a long while. . . .

It is important to analyze why it is so difficult. Consider the case: A man has been living his life according to goals arising out of emotions of egoism, sexual gratification, acquisitiveness or group loyalty, emotions laid deep within the psychic life of every human being, emotions which therefore reinforce themselves by the very frequency with which we find them exemplified in the behavior of others. A man has not only to overcome the resistances within himself; he must overcome his initial fear of the resistance of those among whom he lives, often by no means least the resistance of those nearest and dearest. When Christian decided as a result of his dream to hasten forth from the city of destruction, the discovery that he could not persuade his wife and family to accompany him must have been bitter indeed, although Christian's own previous life could scarcely have been such as to prepare them for so strange a development. When Tolstoy at the age of 50, in all the agony of soul he has imperishably described in his *Confession*, discovered the real nature of the city of destruction and hastened accordingly to flee it, he too found himself in almost complete isolation from his wife and family, although, as he himself realized, the sins of his youth were in no small part to blame.

To follow the voice of truth, as it struggles to make itself heard within the quietude of the individual soul, is difficult because of our instinctive awareness that to do so will not simply fail to add to our popularity, but will evoke strong resistance from those around us, leading at best to a degree of isolation. "There is a saying among children," testified Joan of Arc at her trial, "that men are sometimes hanged for having spoken the truth." There is also an old saw to the effect that if God were to live on earth, people would break His windows. Is not the experience of Socrates, Jesus, Arnold of Brescia, the Maid herself, More, Huss, Giordano Bruno, Servetus, enough to stand in perpetual warning of this terrible truth? But martyrdom requires not only innocence and courage on the part of the victim and cruelty on the part of his persecutors; it requires in addition the acquiescence of the multitude. And a few cannot intimidate multitudes solely by fear. "Ye are many, they are few," as Shelley reminded us. The multitudes must themselves first be morally confused. That this is commonly the case derives from the deceitfulness of the human heart. Men commonly will the good, but are easily gulled. To come to a conclusion that will convict us ourselves of immorality is exceedingly hard, because of the great strength of our vanity and self-love. Paul Tillich has expressed the nature of this inner resistance of the soul with exceptional clarity in his *The Shaking of the Foundations*:

> Our entire inner life, our thoughts and desires, our feelings, and imaginations, are known to God. The final way of escape, the most intimate of all places, is held by God. That fact is the hardest of all to accept. The human resistance against such relentless observation can scarcely be broken. Every psychiatrist and confessor is familiar with the tremendous force of resistance in each personality against even trifling self-revelations. Nobody wants to be known, even when he realizes that his health and salvation depend upon such a knowledge. We do not even wish to be known by ourselves. We try to hide the depth of our souls from our own eyes. We refuse to be our own witness. How then can we stand the mirror in which nothing can be hidden?

But if it is difficult to acknowledge the truth and follow it, it is not impossible. To do what I will may not always lie within my power, but what surely does always lie within my power is the ability to will the good. And it is the peculiar and unique power of the truth that, if acknowl-

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Huber

edged freely and honestly, ultimately it will of its own accord rectify our existing false situation. Truth is impregnable against all forms of attack, all mockery, all satire; it is immune to self-contradiction; it is impervious to the emotions of cunning, deceit, self-doubt. It commands universal attention, and ultimately the obedience of all honest men. "Truth," wrote James Russell Lowell in the *Biglow Papers*, "is quite beyond the reach of satire. There is so brave a simplicity in her, that she can no more be made ridiculous than an oak or a pine."

Nevertheless, truth is a hard taskmaster, for it demands as the first step in its service a willingness to transcend the claims of the self in the service of other selves. Its first and last law is that of renunciation, which though possible for man, does not come naturally to him. And the paradox is that insofar as a man succeeds in his aspiration to obey truth, he inevitably puts himself at the mercy of all who suffer from no such inhibitions and who accordingly take advantage of him. One man's truth has to confront another man's falsehood; one man's forbearance is met with another's will to dominion; the one's agony of conscience contends with him who is without scruple; the one man's love and nonviolence has to brave the threats of hatred and violence; the total vulnerability of the one stands against the bludgeon of a Cain or Raskolnikov.

In logic, the only possible remedy to the arms race based on fear is unilateral disarmament based on trust. The truth of renunciation which is the key to all goodness is pre-eminently demonstrated here, yet nowhere are there apparently so few willing takers. At no point does human skepticism and despair appear more intractable. The reason is to be found in the conviction, so deep in this world, that evil must inevitably triumph over good. From the author of the seventy-third Psalm to Gerard Manley Hopkins men have lamented the evident fact that the ungodly prosper in the world while the godly are chastened for their pains.

Why do sinners' ways prosper? and why must
Disappointment all I endeavour end?
Wert thou my enemy, O thou my friend,
How wouldst thou worse, I wonder, than thou dost
Defeat, thwart me? . . .

Many have found in this fact alone the most eloquent of all testimony to the necessity of the immortality of the soul. Something other must exist to redress the balance of this vale of tears. "Had I no other proof of the immaterial nature of the soul," affirmed Rousseau's Savoyard vicar, "the triumph of the wicked and the oppression of the righteous in this world would be enough to convince me."

But on reflection we must surely see that there was no other way in which man could be taught the truth. If to avoid defeat we resist evil violently, we provide yet another alibi for wrongdoing, we do something dubious, we teach a wrong lesson. Men see only that a battle of wills is taking place, and they understand that well enough from long familiarity. It is essential that we show that we struggle not that our will should prevail but that the truth of justice or equality should prevail. *Not my will but Thy will!* Will it is that we must obey—and it is clearly not the will of organized men, nor is it the natural will of the individual. Then whose will? What is the will we follow in the quest for self-perfection? If it were our own will, would not the skeptics be right who accuse those who strive after perfectibility of vanity or self-righteousness?

We can abdicate all "power" means of implementing our will, only if we have confidence that by following the way indicated by conscience and reason as the true way, thus paradoxically putting ourselves at the mercy of the evil will, good will ultimately be advanced and the truth prevail. *Not my will but Thy will!* But what confidence can we have in the presence of so much violence, a vast surrounding ocean of evil? Faith? Yes, perhaps, but not blind faith—it must be reasonable faith based on evidence and reasoning conducted as always by rigorous adherence to the logic of the argument to the end. After all, if we are to have faith, it may well cost us our lives. The evil one, soldier or criminal, whom men fear as the potential agent of violent death, may well take advantage of our self-chosen vulnerability to dispatch us forthwith. And these are no academic possibilities but actual contingencies being experienced in the flesh by many here and now. Are we to sacrifice our all on the basis of blind faith, where reason would surely call at best for agnosticism?

It is inescapable that so long as one man survives who is willing to take advantage of his physically weaker brother to slay him, this world must remain the kingdom of power. But might it not be that an unknown X factor could, if found, trusted and relied upon, ultimately prevail over the forces of power, of evil, even in this world, the only world we know? But what if this X factor becomes efficacious only if we trust it even unto possible acceptance of

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a violent, premature and otherwise escapable death? And if such an X factor is found by all testable experience to exist, a factor before which power itself is rendered impotent by entirely nonpower means, what name must we give it? Truth? Yes, but it is the very core of truth that we are seeking to define. *Magna est veritas et praevalebit.* Yes, indeed, if we always scrupulously follow it, but what is its essence and what is the evidence? What is the one thing that overcomes all our resistance, our pride, our self-love, our self-seeking, our power? Everyone knows the answer to this—it is love.

Was neverë werre in this worldë
Ne wikkednessë so kenë
That ne love, an him liste,
To laughyngë ne broughtë

But what is love? Again its inmost essence, its great strength, turns out to be powerlessness. When the barrier of our self-pride is broken down, when we become as little children, with the natural, naive humility of the child, it is then and only then, when power has fled us completely, that ultimately we move even the most hardened.

When Joan of Arc rode at the head of her troops, when she was hailed by all France as the maid sent to liberate Orléans, to secure the crowning of the Dauphin, when she mounted her white charger to hurl herself upon the English, she constitutes the very stuff of romance, of legend, of glory, but the truth is not in her. On the contrary, it was during this period that Joan's inimitable qualities of simplicity, common sense, truthfulness, courage first began to show signs of being undermined and corroded by her elevation to a position of leadership among the "great" ones of the earth. As Michelet carefully noted, the banner she originally carried had by the time she was taken at Compiègne been put aside for the sword, "excellent both to thrust and cut." The Christian Maid had become coarsened by military conquest to the point where she could surrender a captured Burgundian freebooter to the royal bailiff for execution. It is only after her capture, after she has been brought low and subjected to base brutality, that she puts on the lineaments of truth—so much so that across half a thousand years she still speaks to our most lucid reason and plumbs the profoundest emotions. Abandoned by the world, entirely alone, exposed to the coarsest insult, sick, wracked by fear and doubt, in mortal physical peril, humbled, she achieves her apotheosis. Treacherously asked if she believed herself to be in a state of grace, she replied: "If I am not, may it please God to bring me into it; if I am, may He preserve me in it." And asked why she had recanted, she defeated guile with the irrefutable courage and simplicity of the truth: "Because I was afraid of the fire."

If we turn back to the story of Jesus himself, we feel compelled to ask if it is mere coincidence that the account of the cursing of the fig tree because it failed to bear fruit out of season, and the hounding of the moneychangers out of the temple—both of them acts out of character and less than edifying—come immediately after Jesus' triumphant ride into Jerusalem, acclaimed by the multitude. Be that as it may, it is certainly not the success which has captured the imagination of the world for two millennia. What moves mankind is the vision of a child cradled in a cattle manger, because there was no room at the inn, which the well-to-do had already occupied. That was the significant beginning; the end was the crucifixion between two thieves. The man taught with unmistakable clarity: *Resist not evil,* and the forgiveness of sin. "Neither do I condemn thee. Go thy way and sin no more." And when Pilate marveled that a man being tried for his life, should make no attempt to defend himself, thrice called on him to answer, he met only with silence. "God forgive them, for they know not what they do." And indeed it is the case: we do not know, we do not really know what it is we do, or we could not inflict such astounding and unbelievable cruelties on one another. Men behold one another incomprehendingly. The Bishop of Linz confronted by the heroic Jägerstätter could see only a young man with a lust for martyrdom; and Jägerstätter could in charity only conceive of the bishop as one who had not received the grace to see things as they really were. But through it all runs the consistent thread of the truth, simple, void of ambiguity, unmistakable to all with eyes to see. On the one hand the sword of Caesar, the governor's crown, the armed might of the centurion, the cry for blood that arises when power feels itself threatened; and confronting it, what? An emaciated, disarmed, defenseless carpenter's son, whose only crime has been the continuous, quiet yet impassioned eloquence of his plea that we should love one another.

To all of which no doubt the reply from those who pride themselves on being what is called "tough-minded" will be that emotion is emotion and reason is reason, and reason indicates that, whatever the truth of the foregoing, we have done nothing to demonstrate that ethics is not an autonomous discipline. We have been discussing morals, not theology. Let it be conceded for the sake of argument: humility and forgiveness, especially of enemies, are high virtues, high guarantors of moral excellence. Where does that leave us? Agnostics have never denied that morality exists, nor would they necessarily quarrel with this definition of the content of morality. The question at issue is whether or not morals are self-sufficient.

Let us recapitulate the central argument. It comes naturally to man to attend to what appear to be in his own interests or conducive to the pleasures of himself or the group with which he emotionally identifies. But all experience testifies that such conduct on the part of individuals and groups leads directly and inevitably to competition, strife, fear, hatred, rivalry, self-deception, greed, xenophobia. In short, they are destructive of man's real interests. Therefore the true form of conduct, which will promote man's genuine interests, is the opposite of self-interest. It consists in finding the meaning of one's life, not in the quest for wealth, power and prestige but in engaging in activities prompted by consideration of the needs of one's fellows. And this policy, although productive of great and enduring satisfaction, does not appear to come naturally and easily to man, although it is certainly possible for him to achieve it. The former metaphysic is the law of power and/or violence and leads to evil; the latter is the law of love and equality and leads to good. And

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the meaning of every individual's life consists in the choice which he is of necessity required to make between these alternatives. The balance of forces is never more than precariously poised between the two; and in the nature of things if the forces of power are sufficiently ruthless, the *immediate* victory must always go to them. And this means that the individual who chooses the good must not only overcome the disposition of his own natural egocentric passions but must also overcome his own natural fears of the powerful, who are in a position to do him great harm, and are very likely to attempt to do so because they are effectively threatened only by the individual who seeks the good and evokes a like response in the conscience of others.

But the question remains: why should the individual choose the good, when it is a path full of difficulties and pitfalls, and may well lead him into a position of discomfort, hardship, persecution or even peril to his life? Because it is the good? But why should I prefer the good to my own immediate comfort, appetites and security? Even if I am capable of willing the good, why should I? Why should I not will what is natural to me? The good is clearly not the fruit of my own spontaneous will, nor is it the will of nature, whose law is one that is indeed "red in tooth and claw"; still less is it the will of human law, which is at all times and everywhere based on fear and violence. Then why should I obey this will? Whose will is it? I should obey it, because it is the will of God. There is no other possible answer. If God did not exist, I would have no reason for obeying this law; it would be no more than the idle dream, which is what vain, presumptuous and wicked men have always cynically claimed it to be.

Nor would this be all. If God did not exist, it would be possible to secure everlasting peace by mutual deterrence through the balance of terror—that is to say, to bring about good by doing evil, as the casuists and sophists would always have us believe. But it is not so possible. As men sow, so shall they always reap. Nothing and no one can disturb this law. And this is the answer to Man Friday's celebrated question to Robinson Crusoe: "Why God not kill the devil?" Man's only protection lies in his obedience to the moral law; were it possible to disobey it with impunity without bringing about evil consequences in its wake, the last barrier between the soul of man and his total depravity would go down. It may be asked why, if God exists, man be not given tangible proof of the fact, authentic evidence verifiable through the senses, scientifically warranted; a Day of Judgment, perhaps? Could we not each of us have been permitted to draw up one day at "A siding at a railway station" with James Anthony Froude, and see with our own eyes the first-class passengers receiving their sentences, and the philosopher who believed that we lived in the best of all possible worlds being condemned to renew his life once more, only this time as one "born blind and paralytic"? Of course the answer is "no," since virtue ceases to be virtue immediately it is followed for reasons of prudence, of calculation or utility.

If God did not exist, then the individual's struggle to perfect himself would indeed be no more than a form of moral vanity or egocentric spiritual pride, which is how the enemies of perfectibility are so eager to construe it. When we fail in our moral striving, we are humbled, and that is good for us. When we succeed—and if success were impossible, aspiration itself would be fatally undermined—we are threatened by pride. When Bunyan was once complimented on the quality of the sermon he had just delivered, he replied: "You need not remind me of that. The Devil told me of it before I was out of the pulpit." If God did not exist, we would indeed be caught in a "double bind" from which no moral escape would be possible. But this is not so, as Job discovered when by his self-righteousness he brought upon himself the voice out of the whirlwind, whose awe-inspiring admonition left him no alternative but to acknowledge that he was "of small account," that he abhorred himself and repented "in dust and ashes."

Finally, if God did not exist, then ultimately we should unavoidably feel impelled to look not simply to our own truthfulness, integrity and humility but to our own *power* to implement the good and ward off the evil. And this quest for power, commonly disguised by what appear to be good or disinterested motives, is the primal source of the evil which we feel ourselves called upon to overcome. We can overcome it completely only if we can say with genuine conviction: *Not my will but Thy will!*

In the context of a discussion concerning the probable outcome of the existing "defense" policies of the world's governments, I was once asked by a clergyman: "Supposing mankind proves unable to turn back the clock of the suicidal arms race of the governments, and the consequences prove as dire as we fear; suppose in fact that all life on our planet were to perish, would it matter?" My immediate response was one of incredulous shock at a question seemingly resting on brutal, callous, cosmic indifference. But the man was kindly, humane, responsible, concerned, and he posed his question with deliberation and a grave serenity. I began to grasp his point. All life is mortal, all living things are destined to perish utterly, leaving no trace. This we know incontrovertibly. So in what sense can it be said to matter if life itself were ultimately destined to perish? I have often attempted to formulate an answer, and have found myself groping inarticulately, for it is as difficult as it is necessary that such a question be faced and honestly answered. I was therefore grateful when I came across the following passage in the *Journal of Amiel*, which seems to me to put the heart of the matter with great clarity and force, and speaks for my own deepest feeling:

> It is by no means necessary that the universe should exist, but it is necessary that justice should be done, and atheism is bound to explain the fixed obstinacy of conscience on this point. Nature is not just; we are the products of nature: why are we always claiming and prophesying justice? Why does the effect rise up against its cause? It is a singular phenomenon. Does the protest come from any puerile blindness of human vanity? No, it is the deepest cry of our being, and it is for the honour of God that the cry is uttered. Heaven and earth may pass away, but good *ought* to be, and injustice ought *not* to be. Such is the creed of the human race. Nature will be conquered by spirit: the eternal will triumph over time.

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ETHICS AND SOCIAL STRUGGLE

BARROWS DUNHAM

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From a moral point of view, politics is peculiar: in its conduct, good means are often ineffective and effective means are often bad. The reason is that politics still moves within its ancient welter of struggle. Struggle is the mixed exercise of consent and coercion. The old democratic principle that government rests on the consent of the governed states more than a moral ideal or a maxim of jurisprudence: it states a fact. For no government can feel secure that has not the consent of most of those it governs. It may in fact govern in the interest of a few, but it must seem to govern in the interest of all and must give empirical signs that it does so. These signs may be temporary and misleading, but they must be there. Accordingly, the evils that attend the gathering and maintaining of consent are deceit and enticement—evils damaging, no doubt, but not deadly.

It is otherwise with coercion. When effective, coercion compels people to do what they do not want to do, or to refrain from what they want to do. It defeats their wishes, and if these wishes are innocent and kind, will thus have caused harm. It will also have caused harm by the very means it uses: slander, loss of livelihood, imprisonment, wounds, death.

Every one of these is an intrinsic evil—that is to say, an evil whenever and wherever it appears, regardless of any good it may be connected with, even as cause to effect. If it were possible, say, to produce paradise by killing 10 million people, the result would be scarred by the killing and would be noticeably less than paradise. There is no way to get a completely good end without using completely good means. This fact troubles only those who seek completely good ends. Sinners and statesmen have not the problem.

From a moral point of view, a system of human behavior in which good means tend to be ineffective, and effective means tend to be bad, is absurd. It is not absurd, alas, in the sense in which a canine leopard is absurd—a thing that cannot be. Quite to the contrary, it is the prevalent system of behavior. During our century, it has caused deaths so multitudinous and agonies so exquisite as to eclipse all previous sufferings. It promises still more and greater, with perhaps as ultimate issue the annihilation of mankind. How much of this must there be, one wonders, before men consider the morality of means as eagerly as the effectiveness of means, and thus begin to purify politics?

Given all this, some people (though not in the end very many) have thought it desirable, or morally required, to abstain from politics, thus to avoid the rot that taints both doer and things done. But this is no escape. To abstain is to allow to happen, and one who permits evil is not much better, though perhaps a little better, than one who commits it. If we abstain from politics, from social struggle, we allow politics to remain as it is: the mere, bare exercise of power, where the victory goes to whoever at the moment has greater power, not to him who uses what power he has, with all its moral risks and calamities, at least for some demonstrable good.

Most of the earth's present population lives in poverty or near it because a few million people of greater power have founded their wealth or modest prosperity upon this condition. The impoverished billions, who are the most, struggle to be least no longer. Ethics commits us to their side, for ethics knows no privileged few and intends the benefit of everyone. The lowly are to inherit the earth, not because they are lowly but because they are nearly all of us and can make a world for us all.

Now, suppose a man, aware that politics involves evil-doing, abstains. He will have a certain moral purity. He will have personally caused no harm, no evil; but he will have prevented no evil, no harm. Moreover, so far as he has lived and acted, the starving billions continue to starve. He would not harm, but he would not help. What if it is the case that not helping is a means of harm?

Thus the good that politics, social struggle, alone can achieve collides with the evident evil of some of the means. From this has arisen the hope that a refusal to commit evil will somehow, despite all expectation, produce the desired end—that the things now accomplished by harm can also be accomplished by love. There is no doubt that the result, if it were to be the result, would be immensely nobler than anything achieved thus far. What we human beings need is unity, concord. Without it, we are left wagging each of us his height amid the multitude —powerless to grow by the growth of all.

But love will be effective only as it evokes love in response, and therefore cooperation. For this to work across great struggles, the "sides" would have to cease being sides. Doubtless, in the end, they must do this, since, if they pursue hate to the limits of weaponry, they will all be dead. Perhaps as against the threat of universal death there is beginning to be a new side, the side of mankind as a whole. If this side were ever to win, all struggles would have ceased or been brought within peaceful administration.

Meanwhile—a long meanwhile, but not I hope a permanent—we are caught in various struggles, and ethics assures us that we gain no moral merit by copping out. We have to stay in. Staying in, we find that love tends to beget hate, and hate love. It's a matter of sides. If you take a side, then you love it and the people on it, and you hate, or at any rate are hostile to, the opposing side and the people on that. Or—the other way round—if you detest a certain side (this happened to many of us, thirty-odd years ago, with the Nazis) then you take the opposing side, with a consequent love. So long as sides exist and are taken, there is no avoiding the dialectic of love and hate, each opposite clutching the other. No avoid-

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ing, that is to say, unless, rising perceptively above the struggle, we can find a side that is hitched to a star.

I think we ought to attempt this; and Christmas, which celebrates the winter solstice—a crisis, not between man and man but between man and nature—seems a good time to try. We are as in a house defiled and rotting, where there can be no repair without damage. Yet it is the only house we have. Shall we burn it down and ourselves within it, or shall we make it resistant to rot and easy to repair?

Let us look, accordingly, at the struggles we are in. These are of three sorts: (*1*) the struggle among nations, (*2*) the struggle among social classes, and (*3*) the struggle of men against government.

(*1*) Nationhood is an old idea, but the chance really to be a nation arose within the past 500 years. The first nations, in the modern sense, became so by seceding from the medieval Church: Luther's Germany, Henry VIII's England. France became a nation without seceding, except for a few revolutionary years; nevertheless, one has to speak of a Gallican Church.

The early nations colonized, and their colonies in turn became nations. Every one of these has heard at some time what we Americans heard in 1775:

A cry of defiance and not of fear,
A voice in the darkness, a knock at the door,
And a word that shall echo forevermore!

It has so echoed, and it is, of course, the midnight message of Paul Revere.

What makes a nation a nation? The fact that the members of it have a common territory, a common tradition, a common mode of producing and distributing goods, a common system of government, usually a common language and, above all, a common apparatus of armed defense and attack. It has thus happened that nations are the way in which men are most powerfully organized. Nowhere is any social class (unless it holds national power) armed against any other social class in the way that nations are armed against nations. Accordingly, the struggle among nations profoundly affects all the other sorts of struggle.

(*2*) The struggle between social classes is that between the relatively few men who make profits on other people's labor and the very many men upon whose labor profits are made. Fifty to a hundred years ago, this conflict appeared most plainly *within* the industrialized nations: capital against labor, employer against employee. When, however, there came to be empires—the British first and now the American—basic exploitation passed over upon colonial peoples, and workingmen in the imperial country were let share, though modestly, the profits. This ingenious device produced the illusion that the class struggle no longer existed at home. At the same time, for colonial peoples, it joined the struggle against poverty with the struggle for national liberation—a prime example of how the two sorts of struggle act on each other.

Other examples abound. Historically, nationhood is a concomitant of capitalism, indeed its offspring. But when, within our century, the leading capitalist powers

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began armed competition for possession of the earth's resources, there occurred two great wars, which had as part of their result the appearance and spread of socialism in very large areas indeed. One-third of the earth's population—a billion people—now lives in some form of socialism. Thus the effect of the nationalist struggle upon the social struggle has been to bring capitalism nearer an end. The true cause of socialism is capitalism itself.

That one gets what one does not want and wants what one does not get is perhaps a law of history. It works the same way on the Socialist side. Marx and Engels observed in the *Manifesto* that "the workingmen have no country"—because, wherever they lived, they suffered the same exploitation. Out of this concept grew Socialist internationalism, the prospect that the working class, since it had identical interests across frontiers, would put an end to national rivalries and therefore to wars. Moreover socialism, as a system without inner conflicts, was expected to need no expansionist adventures. This was the dream, and it is still the dream.

The historical reality was that when the nations collided in 1914, the Socialist parties supported their various governments. Nationalism won over socialism. Lenin alone, with his remarkable followers, held the old internationalist view, and with it he made the revolution in Russia. But when he had made it, he had made it in one country,

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which was immediately attacked by some fourteen other countries, along with armies of the dispossessed aristocracy and bourgeoisie. The evolution successfully defended itself; yet, when all was done, there was socialism in just one country.

There is now socialism in many countries, but these countries appear to be more aware of being nations than of being Socialist. Each has of course adapted Marxism to its immediate national needs, and that is only good sense. But each also asserts its present interpretation of Marxism, joined as it is with just these immediate national needs, to be the only universally valid interpretation. It is sad to see such nonsense in a great movement. Alas, the notion of a One True Church dies hard.

(*3*) The struggle of men against government. The continuing life of this struggle and its recent rise to some sort of primacy show that history is full of irony and wit, and perhaps has these as part of its essence. For this struggle is nothing less than the old capitalist revolution reborn in greater splendor, though with quite different economic intent. The intent now is not at all to exploit anybody, but rather to put everybody beyond the reach of exploitation by any class or control by any bureaucracy.

The old capitalist revolution was in fact a series, beginning with the Protestant Reformation and passing through the Cromwellian wars, the Bloodless Revolution of 1688, our War of Independence and the French Revolution. The ideals of this series were anarchist and even antinomian: liberty, equality, fraternity. Of these it can be said that you won't have any one of them completely unless you have them all. It is fair to judge that commercial society, though it did rather well with liberty, has pretty much failed with the others.

Of this failure our own American history gave the most spectacular example. That all men are created equal is asserted in our Declaration of Independence to be a self-evident truth. Yet the man who wrote those words was himself a slave owner, though not liking the status; and our Constitution, until amended in 1868, counted a slave, for purposes of census, as three-fifths of a person.

If we keep for a moment to arithmetic, we can say that, according to the ideals of the capitalist revolution, one equals one, is neither more nor less than one. It has followed that everybody within the reach of that revolution who, however, turned out to be treated as less than one, has striven to make good the difference. The blacks got only the verbal three-fifths annulled in 1868. They are now demolishing the social, factual difference.

These same ideals guide the rebellion of youth—the ones who are, since it seems we must use this idiotic terminology, not "black" but "white." Here I think we must attempt conjectures that may seem rash. The race between general happiness and universal death is now so close that we must stretch our minds to conceive more than old caution or lingering timidity will allow.

One country in the world, the United States, is technologically equipped to produce abundance, to satisfy all the needs and most of the wishes of its inhabitants. Prosperity (a feeble word in this context) is just around the corner, though the corner is one we may never turn. Something like absolute happiness is possible; so also is absolute ruin.

The chance at absolute happiness exists because some of the conditions for it exist. These conditions also give rise to certain expectations. In a society of abundance, where everyone thrives, one would expect (as part of the thriving) an abundance of liberties, and these would be not freedoms *from* but freedoms *for*—for loving, for giving, for making up one's own mind, untouched and untouchable by penalty or bribe. These freedoms, the freedoms *for*, are exactly the ones the young demand. *Against* is what they are against. *Interdit d'interdire* was the motto of the French students in May 1968.

Accordingly, one can understand why the young white rebels come from prosperous families and comfortable homes. They have grown up in material plenty, and they are thus peculiarly fitted to recognize that their society does not yet grant the liberties that plenty should entail. Moreover, the new sexual freedom, also an effect of technology, saves them from deceits and compromises that used to attend adolescence. They are less soon lured toward hypocrisy, and may thus give candor a long life.

Perhaps that is why the rebellion of youth is so profoundly moral—an attempt to make ethics prevail. The youth don't give you a history of capitalist or bureaucratic practices; they tell you, quite simply, that the practices are wrong. Hard-bitten administrators, for whom ethics has always been a cover rather than a guide, suppose this to be a cover also, and go looking underneath. When they look underneath, what they find is just more morality.

The effect of this third sort of struggle upon the others is extensive and, I think, benign. So far as governmental activity can be held within the ideals of liberty, equality, fraternity—within, say, our Bill of Rights—there will be less violence and more justice and, above all, less likelihood of universal death. If this can happen, what was noble in capitalism will remain: the technology for abundance, and the modes, accurately defined, in which men may live protected amid their vast social powers.

Struggle, in all its varieties and interactions, is as old as recorded history, and no doubt older. It is present history, and will be, for a time one cannot determine, future history. These struggles are the precise source of the odious moral paradox we saw at the beginning: that there can be no improvement without damage, no achieved good without committed evil. The inference seems clear: to get rid of the paradox, we must get rid of its source—that is to say, we must bring all struggles of this kind and magnitude to an end. What are the chances?

(*1*) The struggle among nations is to end in concord. Nationalism has been a stage in which we learned to live, loyally and even affectionately, in something larger than a family, a tribe, a neighborhood. We are to become, what the 18th century was fond of predicting and our visitors upon the moon have proclaimed, citizens of the world, indeed of the cosmos.

(*2*) The struggle among social classes is to end in the sharing of abundance, an abundance that therefore cannot fail to be equal and fraternal. When this has happened, men will look back, as upon past idiocies, astonished that

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there were ever times when some men wanted to own other men, or to be as lords to serfs or as employers to employees. For the whole idea of underlings, wretched of the earth, least of these our brethren, is contrary to reason and contrary to common sense.

(*3*) The struggle of men against government is to end in the ending of government. There is to be a time when no one shall have the power to coerce our decisions or our acts, because, when that time has come, neither the structure of society nor the content of our wishes will entail coercion. This is, of course, the anarchist dream; it is also the Marxist—the withering away of the state.

These three goals, implied though they are in the three sorts of struggle, may be defeated, balked of fulfillment, by the way the goals are sought. Their attainment does indeed seem to require an effort beyond human power, as that power now is or seems likely to be. For my own part, I doubt and doubt bitterly. But doubting ultimate glory is worse than useless, since, if the doubt is confirmed, we have gained nothing, and if the doubt paralyzes (as it will) we may lose a great deal. Suppose, instead, we stubbornly say that the thing can be done. What reasons could we adduce?

(*1*) The thing itself—concord, abundance, liberty—is so attractive, commanding, magnificent that the race would be damnably stupid not to bring it off.

(*2*) Though I may despair when I consider the present rulers of earth, who seem to have little appreciation of the goals, I can also consider the rest of my fellow citizens, the Asians, Africans, Europeans, all of us who are the *peoples* of the world—the now badly governed, who might learn to govern well. And then I cannot feel empty of hope.

(*3*) Suppose I take things at their presumable worst—not saying, however, that human nature is hopelessly corrupt, for from that view I could only draw the useless inference that we are doomed. Let me take as the "presumable worst" human nature as human beings are when they possess and exercise political power. I think that is when people are at their worst. A politician would probably be horrified if he had personally to kill somebody, but he will participate in the killing of thousands, at a remove apparently sanctioned by law or policy.

It has long been understood how one man ought to treat another, and in this regard of person to person our behavior is really not bad. But the behavior of multitudes toward other multitudes is quite a different thing: loyalty to one's own group may seem to entail harm or death to other groups. For some reason, which I don't know, we have done better with person to person than with nation to nation or class to class. Perhaps the thing turns on immediacy: you are with a nice guy and can like him; you are with a charming girl and can love her. The social virtues on a large scale are harder to come by.

Nevertheless, history will show that some great social virtues have been attained in a way that has been lasting. Tolerance is an example. This noble ideal began to be practiced in Holland in the 17th century, because the various constellations of power in that country—churches, synagogues, parties—were in such a relation that no group could dominate any other. The same thing happened in England not long after, and Voltaire, in exile there about that time, was moved to say: "If there were in England only one religion, despotism would be a threat; if there were two, they would cut each other's throat. But there are thirty, and all are content."

My notion is that social morality is a thing that politics backs into. It does the morally good thing because there comes a time when it is impossible to do the opposite. I think that we shall probably survive not because our rulers love us but because they won't want to do the thing that will destroy us all. It will seem to them, as indeed it has on two occasions, politically impracticable.

One doesn't look a gift horse in the mouth, and one doesn't reject salvation because of its origins. I understand, of course, that bad motives may corrupt consequences; but when the consequence is survival and safety, I'll let the motive pass. If we, as a race, survive, the rest of the gains seem attainable, because everything that went into our survival will have promoted them. And in this we can hope for help, unintended perhaps and even unwilling, from the killers that now have power.

Maybe it won't happen that way. Yet as we now are, hanging between glory and disaster, a nudge from us upon our rulers, a faithful insistence upon the best, may very well leave our grandchildren happy—to make the earth a garden, to populate the planets, and to chase, if they wish, the expanding universe.

THE VANDAL IDEOLOGY

SCOTT PARADISE

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Some call it an ecological crisis; others admit only to a variety of serious environmental problems ranging from pollution to ugliness. In any case, the bombardment of articles, books and television programs in the past few years have made us aware that something is wrong. Exploding populations, advancing technology and economic development have joined to face us with a triple threat. But except for a few voices, the depth of the difficulty eludes expression.

We assume, rightly, that more science and technology, better planning, or more adequate political arrangements are needed; but we assume, wrongly, that a combination of these will save us. The argument runs, if we lack as yet the political will to solve the problems, a few local catastrophes will surely bring us to our senses and force

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us in due course to achieve general solutions. While admitting that stricter regulation of polluters and developers will be necessary, we talk as though the American industrial system could survive without really radical modification.

The contrary is true. Not only must our industrial system be changed; the system of beliefs about man's relationship with the natural world which underlies it must be corrected if we are to escape the jaws of the coming crisis. This system of beliefs might be described as an ideology. It is almost always assumed. In one way or another, its propositions are often asserted as self-evident truths. In fact, their influence on social policy and the allegiance they hold over the majority of Americans should make envious the proponents of the traditional religions.

American ideology of man and nature might be reduced to the following seven propositions:

(*1*) *Man is the source of all value.* This is not *anthropocentrism* for that implies only that man is the center of value. Rather it is *anthroposolipsism,* which asserts that man alone has any inherent value. Everything else is valuable only as it benefits man.

(*2*) *The universe exists only for man's use.* This proposition is a corollary of the first. If man is the single source of value, anything which men cannot use is useless and can be destroyed without compunction. Some of us broaden the idea of usefulness to include things of scientific, aesthetic and ecological value. But in practice this belief more often further narrows the meaning of value to that which has calculable economic value. Thus if the world's whaling fleets find profit in exterminating the last of the great whales, the whales must go. No argument about either the rights of whales or their ecological value will be admitted. The only argument that might possibly have effect contends that more profit might be made if whaling were limited so as to guarantee a perpetual harvest of blubber and meat.

Since the universe exists only for man's use, man may with a crusader's zeal war against nature and bring it to unconditional surrender.

(*3*) *Man's primary purpose is to produce and consume.* This is the heart of the good life. We sometimes define man as the tool-using animal, *homo faber.* Theologians pronounce us co-creators with God. As co-creator, man has a license also to destroy and waste. In spite of such protests as the hippies represent, the work ethic still reigns. Neither a play ethic, nor a love ethic, nor a service ethic yet challenges it. Only a consumer ethic grapples with it for supremacy.

(*4*) *Production and consumption must increase endlessly.* Since life's primary purpose is producing and consuming, abundant life blesses us through increasing material abundance. Goods equal the good, and nothing can quench our infinite thirst for them. Growth of the gross national product defines progress and makes possible a continual and simultaneous increase in population and rise in standard of living. Those concerned with social justice see evil in that some nations have enjoyed too little economic growth; they see hope in the possibility that all nations will have more.

(*5*) *Material resources are unlimited.* The thrust of this proposition lies not in the absurdity that the finite Earth has infinite resources but rather that we do not need to heed the warnings of those concerned with their depletion. New deposits of minerals and fossil fuels are found every decade. Our technology of extraction constantly improves and enables us to develop deposits unreachable or uneconomical a few years ago. For those resources genuinely scarce we can find substitutes. Ultimately our technology will be equal to extracting all the raw materials we need for millions of years from sea water and the granite on the earth's surface. When worried voices speak of overcrowding, they need only be referred to the vast empty spaces on the map of the world and the statistics that 70 per cent of Americans are needlessly crammed together on a tiny fraction of the country's land surface. Even warnings about pollutants need not cause alarm because the human genius for short-range technical improvisation is equal to any crisis that is likely to arise.

(*6*) *Man need not adapt himself to the natural environment since he can remake it to suit his own needs.* This assumption, sometimes referred to as "the bulldozer mentality," manifests itself most clearly when American military or business personnel live overseas. There they often create an environment more like that of continental United States than of the country in which they are stationed. We see it also in the possibility, sometimes realized through central heating and air conditioning, of never needing to spend more than a few minutes at a time in temperatures below 65 or above 75 degrees Fahrenheit from one year to the next. We see it in the vacationer who sprays his seaside acreage with DDT. On the other hand, while man need not adapt himself to the natural environment, it is assumed he can and must adjust to any stress perpetrated by his own technology. Smog, noise and ugliness come with progress, and man can and must learn to live with them.

(*7*) *A major function of the state is to make it easy for individuals and corporations to exploit the environment to increase wealth and power.* Ideas concerning private property stand central in this proposition. Because it has influenced the shape of the American social structures, it is easier for a lumber company to cut down redwoods than for the government to prevent it from doing so. It is easier for a developer to destroy a beautiful old mansion to make way for new ranch houses than for the public to organize a drive and raise money to save the historic house. It is easier for strip miners to destroy a countryside than for a legislature to pass preventive legislation or the courts to enforce it. All these business initiatives increase the gross national product. The government structure and operation is biased to encourage such development rather than effectively to protect the natural and cultural heritage.

Although people often assert each of these beliefs, most Americans would perhaps not subscribe to them when stated this baldly. Nevertheless, our social policy, both public and private, operates as if these were our beliefs. And not only does this system of beliefs run in the mainstream of American culture but it is also spreading to infect societies all over the world. Any nation wanting to

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industrialize will find a certain usefulness in it. It tends to free a society from a veneration of places and things which might inhibit their being used for economic development. It directs attention away from personal and family relationships, away from tradition and ceremonial. It offers a moral alternative to leisure. These ideas seem necessary in order to blast most nations out of ancient ways and set them on the road of development.

But in the long run the consequences of this ideology must be disastrous—first, because no organism can endlessly multiply and exploit its environment; second, because it betrays life's meaning to elevate the economic, technical and procreative processes to absolutes. In America where this ideology has long been dominant, people tend to forget that it is not self-evident and has not always been universally accepted. It contradicts assumptions around which most cultures have organized life throughout history. Even today in the developing nations

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many governments are struggling with wrongheaded persistence to win the unwilling and recalcitrant people of the villages to this ideology.

The profound challenge facing America today is whether we can discover a new orientation which will preserve the necessary values and the truths in the current ideology, and yet redirect our goals so as to preserve our environment and our humanity itself.

To correct the seven propositions just stated is a good place to begin. They might be restated thus:

(1) *Man is to be valued more highly than other creatures.* Such a proposition is truly anthropocentric. It puts man at the pinnacle of creation but does not isolate him as the only thing of value. Other creatures have beauty and splendor of their own.

That this kind of assertion perplexes many in the culture is hardly surprising. A nation that coined the phrase, "The only good Indian is a dead Indian," is not likely to defend the cause of wildlife. But moral progress follows a widening awareness of the circle of fellowship. If we see it as ethical advance to discover Indians as our brothers, it is a move in the same direction to recognize animals as our cousins. Some of the most eloquent spokesmen for this perception speak out of the scientific community. Men like Loren Eiseley and Konrad Lorenz, who have spent lifetimes sensitively observing nonhuman life, can tell us without sentimentality that many animals are capable of relationship with us. Unfortunately, they cannot say with like confidence that we are interested in relating to them.

But many cannot believe that anything has value not bestowed on it by men. Those so invincibly anthroposolipsists might just understand that the human race is not an island but a part of the whole community of life. If any species disappears, man and all the rest are diminished. The extermination of animal species attendant on the growth of human population reduces the variety, fascination and stability of the biosphere. And therefore it erodes the quality of human life.

(2) *Man has become the guardian of the earth.* His prerogatives to use the earth's resources are balanced by his responsibility to cherish them, protect them and use them carefully. Man does evil when he exterminates species of animals or does irreversible damage to the environment. When he does destroy life he needs to calculate the benefits he receives against the impoverishment of the living community. Man also is able to improve the environment. These changes entail disadvantages as well as benefits. Here, too, costs as well as benefits need to be carefully calculated before the project which will effect the change is undertaken.

(3) *Man is far more than a producer and consumer.* Without production and consumption, of course, life cannot continue. But without singing, dancing or poetry, without loving, discovering or learning, without art, music or drama, life is hardly worth continuing. By participating in these pursuits in concert we lay hold of our humanity. The model of life as mass production and massive consumption is only one of many possible models. Most cultures throughout most of the human experience have been decidedly less obsessed than we with getting and spending. A recent study of the Kung Bushmen in the Kalihari Desert reports that on the average these people spend only three days a week food gathering and hunting. During the remaining four days they vigorously pursue noneconomic activities. Such a record, while perhaps arousing the wrath of their work-oriented fathers, would fill many of today's youth with envy and admiration. Our massive affluence should make it possible to emulate the Bushmen to some degree and so recover new dimensions of our humanity.

(4) *Improvement in the quality of life takes precedence*

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over increasing the quantity of material production. The growth of the gross national product does not necessarily lead to an enlargement of human well-being. It may in some instances lead to the opposite. Our social goal should be to achieve a zero rate of population increase and a state of increasing human well-being with a minimum increase in material production and consumption. Herein lies a new understanding of efficiency. In the long run this policy should lead to a state of relative equilibrium bebetween the human race and the natural environment. But within this relative equilibrium men could make great progress in the arts, literature, sciences and human relationships.

(5) *Material resources are to be used carefully and cherished.* The assumption of limitless resources breeds indifference to waste and to the likely needs of our descendants. This indifference drains us of joy and appreciation for things in the intoxication of consumption. Russell Baker observed in *The New York Times* that to transform goods into trash as quickly and efficiently as possible has become America's major pastime. On the other hand, human fulfillment comes not through an ascetic denial of the value of material things but by passionately and sensitively embracing them. Using and loving a few things long and carefully leads to a different kind of experience, a more profoundly fulfilling one, than does the careless use and abandonment of many things in rapid succession. We need a new materialism to replace the consumerism which now goes by that name.

(6) *Man is to relate himself to the natural environment, remaking it according to its nature as well as for the sake of his short-term economic advantage.* Such considerations in many instances might deter us from covering superb farm land with parking lots, shopping centers and suburban subdivisions, or from carelessly filling or polluting intensely rich protein-producing wetlands and estuaries. It might save us from building expressways on some of our urban shore lines or trying to farm areas whose soil will predictably respond by becoming wasteland. Man's power to improve the world for his own use is not unlimited. His actions on it result in ecological reactions. He is part of a living web which responds when he acts and forces him to respond when it acts. Such a pattern of mutual action and reaction may be described as a relationship. In most instances man rightly claims the initiative and determines the quality of the relationship. But to make war on nature and force it to an unconditional surrender will lead to unexpected and disconcerting counterattacks. To win final victory requires that we make a desert and call it peace.

(7) *A major function of the state is to supervise a planning process which will prevent the impairment of the quality of the environment.* This proposition implies a different conception of the rights of property. Land and resources cannot be seen as ours in the sense that we can abuse or destroy them for profit or pleasure. Instead, the right to hold and develop them depends on these actions contributing to the public good and preserving the quality of the environment. Of course, this principle can be applied only with complicated calculations of costs and benefits, but too often the calculations are still being made on the assumption that measures adopted for private gain usually lead to public benefit and that short-run, measurable economic advantage is an adequate criterion for determining action. The burden of proof must be shifted from those who would preserve the environment to those who would exploit it, and from those who would limit property rights in the interest of public and environment to those who would defend such rights for private advantage.

These suggested modifications of our beliefs about man's relationship with nature are perhaps so radical as to be almost incomprehensible to many. Nevertheless, such thoughts are increasingly in the air. Conservationists, ecologists, hippies and certain groups of the New Left have created a climate in which such ideas have become more plausible than they were only a few years ago. [See "Man in Nature: Model for a New Radicalism" by Catherine Riegger Harris, *The Nation,* November 10.] Most of us, however, still doggedly embrace the hope that we can continue in the present course and save our society by tinkering. We still prefer to hope that if we reduce the military budget, develop better urban planning and pollution-control techniques, and enlarge the war against poverty, all will be well.

Technological forecasters and other futurists are still debating whether such a hope is realistic. The supposition that "something will turn up" to retrieve the situation can keep the hope alive and the argument continuing beyond the point of no return.

And, of course, it is just possible that the present system can continue on approximately its present path. But even if it can, argument can be made that it shouldn't. The perceptions and commitments suggested in the modified statement of belief serve as a far more satisfying basis for human fulfillment than does the current ideology. A society that would emerge from this new vision might have powerful appeal. Rebellious youth and growing interest in conservation may be straws in the wind to suggest that it would. In this appeal may lie seeds of revolution.

Crescentius

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

A Mighty Maze! But Not Without A Plan

THE SCIENCE OF FREEDOM. *Vol. II of* The Enlightenment: An Interpretation. *By Peter Gay. Alfred A. Knopf. 223 pp. $10.*

J. H. PLUMB

Mr. Plumb is a professor of history at Christ's College, Cambridge. His latest book, The Death of the Past, *will soon be published in this country by Houghton Mifflin.*

For generations now the philosophers of the Enlightenment have suffered in public esteem because of the disrepute into which they fell during the 19th century. They were dismissed as superficial thinkers who could never resist a witticism; mockers who scoffed at the sacredness of belief; blind optimists who ignored the sinfulness and bestiality of man; lackeys of authority who pandered to the foibles of despots; armchair revolutionaries and sofa cynics.

At the head of the family was Voltaire, grinning toothlessly and maliciously at the follies of men, yet ignoring their grandeur. Rousseau presented difficulties, for his very obscenity seemed to hint at profundity. But his total lack of judgment, the parade of his own indecencies, the crass, unendurable sentimentality of his novels, particularly *Emile*, put the bulk of his work beyond consideration. *Le Contrat Social*, within the context of the history of political thought, could be treated as both profound and important: in the same sense that Hume's *Treatise on Human Nature* could be absorbed into the history of philosophy or Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* treated as the foundation of economic theory. But the full context of their thought; its growth, its complexity, its social impact, its intimate relationship with the whole family of the philosophers, was quite another matter.

For many decades now, interest has revived in 18th-century thought and thinkers—one has only to turn to the two magisterial bibliographical essays in Peter Gay's two volumes to realize the wealth of material upon which he has drawn. And yet this material is largely technical, professional and limited, dealing with some specified aspect of the work of Diderot or Voltaire or Rousseau. Very few scholars have attempted to survey the whole of the Enlightenment. What has, alas, been absent in this plethora of books and articles on the *philosophes* is a sense of relevance to modern times and modern thought. We have needed a synthesis that rose beyond particular studies, one that would confirm that the *philosophes* were the first to proclaim the potentialities and aspirations of modern man and to offer some of the sharpest criticisms ever made of tyranny, obscurantism and infamy.

Outrageous claims? I do not think so. Better still, neither does Peter Gay. His book will be a turning point, not in the studies of the Enlightenment (which are too complex for that) but in what is more valuable still: in the appreciation of what the thinkers of the 18th century had to offer, not only to their own dark and troubled world but also to ours. If this should be so, he will have made a contribution to far more than historical study. He may be instrumental in helping a new recovery of nerve among modern humanists. It is overdue.

In this volume, Peter Gay describes the reactions of the family of *philosophes* to aesthetics, to science, to law, to politics and to education. He draws on a wide range of works, moving with practiced skill from Ferguson, Smith or Dugald Stewart to Beccaris, Winckelmann or Kant. Few men in our generation have read so widely or so deeply in the huge output of the philosophic family as has Professor Gay. No book of prime importance slips through his net. He discusses them all. But he never assumes that his readers will be so familiar with any work that he need not describe its theme and intention. In less skilled hands this could easily have led to an endless *précis* of books, but Gay's summaries of content are always pertinent to the underlying themes of the Enlightenment.

In essentials, the *philosophes* wished to explain life in purely human terms. Even though they did not abolish God, they pushed Him back into a first cause or a principle of benevolence implicit in the universe as they saw it. They judged law, institutions, political philosophy, and education by the touchstone of human happiness. The quality of life, however, was not the standard by which most 18th-century governments evaluated institutions. They accepted slavery, torture, child labor, rigorous censorship, brutal laws and brutal punishments. One needs to be reminded over and over again of what a prison to spirit, mind and body was much of 18th-century life.

The *philosophes*, from Voltaire to Samuel Johnson, shared a sharp realization of the infamous ways of men entrusted with power. Furthermore, they knew that many of these horrors arose out of a blind acceptance of the authority of the past. And so they battled and fought with every literary weapon in the efficient armory, from works of learning to lighthearted poetry. The *Encyclopaedia* and *Emile* had the same intention: to criticize society in the hope of a reformation which would enhance human life, make it freer, happier and more secure.

And they believed, the majority of them, that this could be achieved by the application of intelligence to human problems—by developing a science of living. Aware of man's tendency to persecute, subject and exploit, they were nevertheless confident that life could only improve if the areas in which intelligence could have full play could be extended. These areas were primarily religion, politics, law. The Enlightenment was, as Professor Gay demonstrates so aptly, a time of renewed confidence in man's ability to understand his world and, perhaps, improve it by pushing back the boundaries of ignorance.

This book has a richness of intention as well as of texture. It re-establishes the grandeur, the nobility and the dedication of the *philosophes*. No one, in the future, will be able to dismiss them as superficial. As a panorama of 18th-century intellectual life, Gay's book is outstanding. However, like all books which cover so wide a field, it has some shortcomings.

England's intellectual life is treated as if its developments were similar to those of Europe; whereas momentous changes were taking place in England that were ominous for the further development of the Enlightenment itself. From the 1730s one can discern in England a growth of and a respect, almost a hunger, for tradition; a movement away from Locke to Burke, an idealization (at least among the upper classes and the literary establishment) of what has been rather than an argument for what might be. The attitude of the *philosophes* was being adopted by a different social class: in England by the technocrats, industrialists and dissenters. This was to happen more generally throughout Europe after 1780.

And I, for one, would have welcomed a close analysis of the relationship between social movements and the ideas of the philosophic family. Treating the period of roughly 1690-1780 as a unity must

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lead to some distortion. The absence of consideration of those social groups for whom the works of the *philosophes* bore the hallmark of freshly discovered truth is, to me, unfortunate in a work of such quality.

These criticisms are not made, however, to belittle one of the most impressive feats of scholarship of the sixties. For the work, as a whole, I have the most profound admiration. It will be a long time before it is surpassed.

Unpredictable as Grace

THE ZIG-ZAG WALK: Poems 1963-1968. *By John Logan. E. P. Dutton & Co. 123 pp. $5.95. Paper $2.45.*

A. POULIN, Jr.
Mr. Poulin, a poet, is completing an anthology of contemporary American poetry for Houghton Mifflin, and editing a collection of contemporary poetics and criticism for E. P. Dutton. He is chairman of the Division of Humanities at St. Francis College in Maine.

Reviewing John Logan's second book of poems, *Ghosts of the Heart*, in 1962, James Dickey concluded that Logan stood "an exciting chance of being one of the finest poets we have ever had in this country." *The Zig-Zag Walk* confirms Dickey's judgment. Logan's fourth collection is his finest to date, and one of the decade's most exciting books of poems.

Absent from these poems is the equipage of erudition which sometimes cluttered Logan's earlier work: the Roman Catholic dogma and "orthodox symbology" (as Dickey called it) which tested the reader's willing suspension of disbelief; and unsuccessful attempts at confessional verse à la Lowell. Present and perfected is Logan's characteristic lyricism; his fine attention to minute detail:

I see the seaside daisy
die so beautifully
here. It loses its nunlike coif
as the lavender leaves fall off
and tiny yellow rockets burst
about its heart
till only the perfect-
spiraled flower skull is left . . . ;

his sensuality of imagery:

Here the logs lie like lovers,
short by long, benign,
nudging gently in the tide. . . .

and his religious imagination:

For like the lost or stolen flesh of God,
the self, more alive or more dead,
opens on to truth
of earth
and sea and sky—
and the thieves' cave yawns empty
of our smuggled body.

These new poems are exciting and moving because they are genuinely personal and natural, determined neither by thematic nor structural formula. In an earlier poem Logan theorized that the poet's gift is

. . . the wand of tongues
that charms the exile
of listeners into a bond of brothers, breaking
down the lines of lead that separate a man from a
man, and the husbands from their wives, in these old burned glass
panels of our lives.

In these poems, poetics is transformed into practice. Although controlled and often masterly, they succeed in sounding as natural as breathing, beginning simply and growing in intensity and power out of their own necessity, as the breath of a man in battle or in love, and rising to a discovery of personal epiphanies. They are "unpredictable as grace." Never is the poet's hand obvious or obtrusive; and never does he engage in personal, verbal or technical *entrechats* which draw attention to themselves. Rather, the poetry is genuine and transparent. Here is a person. This is the sound of a man's voice when he speaks poems. And the poetry is in the person.

What is also memorable is the quality of personalism which Logan has achieved, the self revealing its multifaceted and complex dimensions in small interpersonal dramas and in direct intimacy with the reader. Logan does not expect his reader to be either father confessor, psychiatrist or voyeur. He speaks to him as friend and lover, revealing himself gradually, sharing unexpected moments of quiet joy, both large and small revelatory experiences, but respecting certain areas of himself and his experience as sacred. When he does confess, he usually admits simply to that most basic human failure of not responding to another, of either not giving or recognizing that human grace which is indeed capable of redeeming the time—even if only for the briefest moment. So that having come to the end of the book, one does not sense that he has examined a case study or waded through pools of an actively imaginative psyche. One knows he has been touched by a whole and commanding person.

Although a full thematic design does emerge, the poems individually discover and rediscover a man's vital and open-ended sense of life in each new experience. The book's thematic design is itself open-ended. In the concluding poem, "The Search" (which originally appeared in *The Nation*), he repeatedly asks, "Whom do I seek?" Much of *The Zig-Zag Walk* describes that search: in effect the self's quest for full realization and transcendence. If "orthodox symbology" is absent from these poems, Logan's essentially religious imagination is still very much present—somewhat secularized in appearance, but also strengthened in intensity.

The book's opening poem, "The Zoo," posits the conflicting assumptions of Logan's central theme. On the one hand, the self participates in the basic search, "the continuous, universal game/ of fish becoming man." But in various other parts of the book, it is clear that that game prods, magnetizes man ever farther up on the evolutionary ladder toward a final self-realization. And essential to this evolution, of course, is the ability and willingness to change, to engage in process, even in that final process of death which, Logan quotes Gabriel Marcel as saying, "is not a problem to be solved./ It is a mystery to be entered into."

In "Birches" Robert Frost said: "I'd like to get away from earth awhile/ And then come back to it and begin over." Logan recognizes much the same spiritual tension. The impetus toward transcendence is, on the one hand, virtually arrested, for the self is trapped in a complex of cages and prisons. And it is precisely that tension which offers the self the opportunity for transcendence. A kind of reversal of Frost's precept. There is participation in animal history; in "The Zoo" he writes:

This Primate House echoes
with our mixed cries;
it reeks with our ambiguous breath.
Each one caged as an oracle
I feel each upright animal
can tell
how much my life is a human life,
how much an animal death.

There is also participation in the moral history of guilt: in "Three Moves" he recognizes the essential difference between animals and man; the tame ducks do not rise:

These foolish ducks lack a sense of guilt,
and so all their multi-thousand-mile range
is too short for the hope of change.

Then there are "the prisons of our skins" and society's real jails where

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We are nailed up as in a coffin,
Only touched by burlap clothes or bugs.
We would stroke the beaming shoots of sun!
But they've blocked every window tight with tin.

And lastly there is the paradoxical contemporary jail of exile (in Canada) because of that interminable Vietnamese War which thwarts "the keen blessing of your insight/ . . . bright and quick/ with presence as a fresh, dawn-white/ drop of milk."

There is still another kind of prison, that caused by the self's attachment to "the fogged earth/ down there/ with its esoteric itch of flesh." The self is a landlubber at heart: "I am afraid . . ./ I reach for land." It is afraid of heights: "I feel afraid in this/ shattering new light./ Dread drifts like fog around my heart./ Why?/ The sheer, terrible height?" And: "The awful height stirs in me/ the huge, uneasy/ gull of my own soul." Indeed at times the self is simply recalcitrant as Frost's Yankee, refusing to leave this earth:

I'll stay here
among the monuments of sheer,
brown and gray rock
where you can read
the names of lovers, sailors and of kids
etched in chalk. . . .

However, it's not all that simple. Logan realizes that final transcendence can be achieved only when and if the self has fully responded to human and earthly experience. His premise asserts an inner generated and outer directed process of change and growth. The mystery of salvation (if one can resort to such terminology at a time when everyone but the Pope is dropping that notion) is its incarnation. Grace is discovered and given and received specifically through human and incarnate acts: the self giving itself up totally to earth and sea and sky; a friend who has given up his house and bed to young lovers; a young girl's gift of a "blue, porcelain/ egg . . ./ colored beautifully/ for a Russian Easter. . . ." And the final grace of death ("Poem, Slow to Come, On the Death of E. E. Cummings"):

You wrapped your lean,
linen arms close around your life
naked as before our birth,
and began to weave away from earth
uttering with a huge, awkward, torn cry
the terrible, final poetry.

Logan's central theme is best represented in "White Pass Ski Patrol" which is a secular and sporty account of the ascension. This member of the ski patrol "has become very strong/ living on the slopes," continually rising (on the ski lift) and caroming "down his own path" —speeding, dancing, balancing, taking all human risks and, when necessary, ministering to others, at times pulling down "from the dangerous cascades his/ heavy sledge of pain." And he rises again, "vanishes in air!" But only after he has come down, after he has learned what the body can do, what grace the body can realize on its own. So that finally:

There are the shadow tracks he left
down the long, white hill
beside the lift. Wait! Look up! Cloud
trails in the bright sky!
Breathing a wake of snow ribbons,
something has just flown over the mountain!

Like Teilhard de Chardin's fully evolved man, the skier moves through the final process into pure light.

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Labyrinthine Ways

THE BOOK OF IMAGINARY BEINGS. *By Jorge Luis Borges with Margarita Guerrero. Revised, enlarged and translated by Norman Thomas di Giovanni in collaboration with the author. E. P. Dutton & Co. 256 pp. $6.95.*

STANTON HOFFMAN
Mr. Hoffman teaches English at Sir George Williams University in Montreal. He is the author of a recent study of Joseph Conrad, published by Mouton.

A dealer in enigmas and perplexities, Jorge Luis Borges is a strangely singular writer. He has created forms unlike any others in our literature, the *ficciones* and the *inquisiciones*, his terms for his short fictions and essays respectively. The forms often seem interchangeable. His fictions, which are sometimes no more than summaries of several versions of a single work by an imaginary author, where real and imaginary authors and characters intermingle, are deceptively simple vehicles for the most complex and labyrinthine philosophical arguments about time, reality, God, the universe, consciousness, human thought—arguments which, Borges claims, interest him more for their aesthetics than for their truth. *The Book of Imaginary Beings* further reveals the formal singularity of Borges, for it elevates compilation to a potentially fictional form and suggests the encyclopedia as art.

The Book of Imaginary Beings is a fantastic bestiary, a compilation and alphabetical arrangement made up of examples taken from familiar and more distant, esoteric mythologies, as well as, in a few cases, from individual writers such as Kafka, Poe, C. S. Lewis, Swedenborg. They are creatures imagined or dreamt at different periods in time and culture, beings of the imagination like Leviathan, Behemoth, the Sphinx, Cerberus, Hydra, the Phoenix, Griffins, Unicorns, Fairies. Borges' interest in these fantastic creatures comes from how they reveal that men in different times and places share similar, if not identical,

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dreams, and that men dream and think into existence amazing beings that are strange, powerful, and as real in their unreality as we are unreal in our reality.

In some cases, Borges' entries are very brief:

> As all Egyptians knew, Abtu and Anet were two life-sized fishes, identical and holy, that swam on the lookout for danger before the prow of the sun god's ship. Their course was endless; by day the craft sailed the sky from east to west, from dawn to dusk, and by night made its way underground in the opposite direction.

In other cases, his entries are longer, more elaborate, as when he presents the Phoenix, which he relates to the Egyptians' search for eternity, to the mirror of the Platonic Year, and to the history of the world repeating itself. His entry concludes, characteristically, with a bibliography of the various writers who have referred to the Phoenix: Herodotus, Pliny, Claudian, Ovid, Dante, Quevedo, Milton, Shakespeare in *Henry VIII*, a Latin poem attributed to Lactantius, an Anglo-Saxon imitation of this poem, Tertulius, St. Ambrose, Cyrillus of Jerusalem. In all cases, the entries are terse, cryptic, matter of fact, lacking comment or interpretation, as if the book were no more than what Borges' remarks in his preface seem to suggest, that this is simply a compilation in which there is a "kind of pleasure in useless and out-of-the-way erudition."

But I want to suggest that *The Book of Imaginary Beings* is more than a Borgesian entertainment. Its real justification lies in its relationship to Borges' other work, especially to those pervasive themes and metaphors which seem to me to establish Borges' singularity and importance as a writer. For the reader of Borges (who because he is a reader of Borges will be open to this sort of thing), *The Book of Imaginary Beings* is one long, elaborate and elegant *ficcion* or *inquisicion*. The difference is that here there is only the inference of the typical Borgesian protagonist, the man who thinks labyrinths into existence, whose mental processes are these labyrinths, and who is ultimately trapped in these labyrinths.

The inference of a universal mind and dreamer, arguments about the self as an illusion and a dream (since we are being dreamt by someone else), the implications of extreme idealist arguments, and constructs about the nature of time and consciousness—these essential Borgesian themes manifest themselves not only in this book's encyclopedic totality but also in its choices of particular entries. Borges' entry on Bahamut or Behemoth closely resembles one of his fictions, "The Circular Ruins." Both involve arguments of infinite regression, forms of Zeno's paradox about Achilles and the Tortoise: a paradox which is central to Borges' fiction and vision. In Bahamut, God, having made the earth, then needed to provide the earth with a base, and then that base with another base, and that base with another base, and so on. In "The Circular Ruins" a man dreams another man into existence only to realize that he too is being dreamt by someone, which implies that the person who is dreaming him is also being dreamt by someone, and that person by someone else, on to infinity.

The encylopedia is the form for the revelation of the totally idealist world of Tlon in Borges' fiction, "Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius." The encylopedia becomes the book of and the metaphor for the universe, analogous to the libraries that figure so importantly both in Borges' life and in his fictions: "The Library of Babel" and "The Secret Miracle." Sought for in the mazelike libraries of these stories is the one book that will explain everything and that will provide a solution to the confusing chaos of symbols and books that are collected in these libraries. Borges' librarians seek to find arguments of order in their surroundings of enigmatic disorder. Yet to argue belief in the existence of a book, a catalogue of catalogues, that contains all other books and is thus the key to the library and its vast and chaotic volumes, is to be caught in an impossible labyrinth. Again, one finds only an infinite regression: each catalogue of catalogues must imply a prior catalogue of catalogues.

Thus this congenial and pleasurable "useless" act of erudition leads to labyrinths and hints of desperation and futility. Underlying this compilation is what defines the worlds of Borges' fiction and essays: the desire for and the terror of self-annihilation, entrapment in the labyrinths of one's own making, and the possibilities of order out of disorder and confusion. There may be a key to the dreams that make up *The Book of Imaginary Beings*, but this key is missing. At the end of "The Library of Babel," Borges' librarian protagonist speaks of his solitude, rejoicing in the hope that he has found some kind of ultimate order in his infinite library. We are free, as Borges or his librarian, to try all sorts of arguments and constructions, but with the suspicion that these constructions and arguments may be after all only our own labyrinths.

The volume contains three prefaces: one to this present English translation, and the prefaces to the 1967 and 1957 Spanish editions. In his 1957 preface, Borges talks about the responses of children to the real zoo, which he implies is no different from our responses to the fabulous or imaginary zoo of mythologies.

TANGENT

This afternoon
I watched a young black man named Jackson
step into the first pitch
from a man with a Southern noncom face
and hit it out of the game.

It did not seem
a social comment.

But rather a young man
clocked a fastball, and, keeping
his right (moundward) elbow locked
as he'd said on the pregame show he
must, interrupted it
with the force
of his back and thighs.

The ball was still reaching
for its arc as it (bird, impulse) cleared the chainlink fence
in right center.
Moments later
electric words on the scoreboard
said the longest ever to that side
of the stadium,
but I already
knew that.

DENNIS TRUDELL

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In his preface to the 1967 edition, Borges declares that all things, including the universe, ourselves, even God, are imaginary beings, and that in terms of these "strange creatures conceived through time and space by the human imagination," we are ignorant of the meaning of the dragon in the same way that we are ignorant of the meaning of the universe.

Because a book of this kind "is unavoidably incomplete," each new edition will form the bases of future editions, which "themselves may grow endlessly." Borges is aware that his search is for more and more evidence, but he is without the sense of what this is to be evidence for. Thus he must imagine a book that must contain everything. This third edition of *The Book of Imaginary Beings* is part of this impossible movement toward this impossible completeness.

'Hooked!'

OUR CRIMINAL SOCIETY: The Social and Legal Sources of Crime in America. *By Edwin M. Schur. Prentice-Hall. 244 pp. $6.95. Paper $2.95.*

THE PLEASURE SEEKERS. *By Joel Fort, M.D. The Bobbs-Merrill Co. 255 pp. $6.50.*

JACK LEAVITT

Mr. Leavitt is an assistant professor of law at John F. Kennedy University, Martinez, Calif., and a free-lance writer.

The general public seems to have little use for ideas that contradict present attitudes about crime, drug abuse and the roots of discontent. Crime continues to be symbolized by Negro thugs waiting in darkness to rob and attack us; drug abuse continues to be identified as a fixed progression from marijuana to heroin to hell, with hallucinatory side trips through LSD, brought about by evildoers who snare our children with the joys of degeneracy; discontent continues to be deemed an exaggerated clamor by those who prefer immorality and laziness to the assured rewards of hard work. The problems we face have one comforting feature: we consider ourselves victims instead of perpetrators. Stop *them* and you save us.

It is all summed up by Harry Anslinger, former U.S. Commissioner of Narcotics, in the December 1969 *Esquire*:

> If we are to survive, we must reject the ruinous and insidious policies of liberal bleeding hearts, soft judges and super-sophisticated do-gooders. History is strewn with the bones of nations which have tolerated weak laws, indifferent enforcement and court leniency.

By definition, a crime is an act or omission that violates a specific command of a duly constituted legislative body which has made its determination within constitutional limitations. In our fallible way, we have empowered our fallible representatives to express the communal will on what behavior threatens our well-being. If a specific prohibition squares with our organic law, which rarely deals in details, we must either obey the decision, prepare to suffer the prescribed sanctions, flee to a more permissive society, or compound our violation by attempting to unhorse the sovereign. Ideally, we should each benefit from universal obedience to our criminal laws and be grateful for a society that can control its outlaws.

Despite this hope, we face an immediate gap between our legislative enactments and our individual conduct because, as Dr. Edwin M. Schur, a sociologist, educator and attorney, indicates, our social problems reflect our form of social organization. "Disorganization and organization are theoretically inseparable," he says; "the types of problems we find in a given social order represent the price that is paid for maintaining that particular structure." Since much crime is closely related to other aspects of the American social order, we must do more than "eliminate" criminal activities. We must, Schur believes, find "functional alternatives," or approved ways of satisfying the same individual and social needs that inspired the objectionable conduct.

Thus Schur calls America a "criminal" society: its criminality is what it deserves. As major support for this broad premise, he cites the "real crimes" of our culture: a great inequality between the supposedly equal members of our society; a national willingness to use violence (especially depersonalized, euphemistic violence) as a basic implement of foreign policy; an emphasis on the values of dynamism, individualism, competition and personal monetary success to give meaning to typical social situations; a tendency to "create" crime by legislating against private conduct like consensual homosexuality, abortions, use of drugs and other "crimes without victims"; and our adoption of an unseeing, unworkable orientation to crime problems, usually based on "get tough" policies that isolate criminal behavior from general social reform.

Moving from this overview of criminality to the prevention of particular crimes by early identification of potential offenders, of course, presents our greatest difficulty, chiefly because most people in a "crime setting" do *not* become criminals. Examined critically, our causal theories of criminal behavior—from innate criminality programmed by atavistic genes, to mental or moral defectiveness, to imitative patterning after the literature of the mass media, to poverty, to racial discrimination, to the impact of broken homes—all fail in one regard. They never explain why, but for the grace of God, John Bradford—or any of us—has so far escaped the hangman. Given this unknown difference, this extra power in ourselves, we would rather post rewards for the apprehension of our felonious inferiors than give those potential felons a greater chance for a productive life.

No better introduction to our national incongruities will serve than a few sentences from back-to-back pages of the standard textbook, *The Pharmacologic Principles of Medical Practice* (2d ed.):

> The [LaGuardia] Committee's investigation showed that Marihuana smoking did not produce a tolerance for the drug or a true addiction with withdrawal symptoms. The sensations desired by the habitués were a feeling of contentment, inner satisfaction, and a free play of the imagination. The relation between Marihuana usage and eroticism was found capricious. . . . *The drug is a vicious one and serves no purpose in therapy.* [Emphasis added.]

Harmless but evil—so runs the refrain.

From the standpoint of Dr. Joel Fort, a physician specializing in public health, social psychiatry, and drug abuse, "essentially everyone is a drug user even if the discussion is restricted solely to mind-altering substances." Himself a teetotaler and nonsmoker, he believes in progressing beyond drugs to a society where, "lives of significance, relevance and meaning can be developed which include love for people, beauty, art, literature, music, nature, and other facets of a rounded, full, and creative life." In the interlude, however, he considers it dangerously hypocritical of us to condemn a small range of drugs while we enthusiastically drink, smoke, swallow, sniff or inject equally objectionable substances. Perhaps the most serious result of present drug controls, he feels, is that in the absence of aggrieved private complainants, the punitive laws will be enforced only by making us an oppressive society, featuring police spies and routine violations of our constitutional rights.

Fort's compendium of popular drugs provides an impressive setting against which we can measure the reasonableness of our current drug laws. In his list of socially approved substances are *aspirin* (responsible for thousands of deaths and illnesses each year, plus birth de-

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fects in lower animals); *alcohol* (which produces death from cirrhosis of the liver and psychosis from irreversible brain damage, and which has created more alcoholics in the metropolitan San Francisco area alone than there are narcotics addicts in the entire United States); *nicotine* (an $8-billion-a-year industry, directly responsible for the premature deaths of 125,000 Americans annually); *caffeine*, as found in coffee-tea-chocolate (which causes insomnia, restlessness, irritability, cardiac irregularity, perceptual disorders, tremors and accelerated breathing, and which can break chromosomes); *tranquilizers* (which cause many users to suffer from skin rash, light sensitivity, rigidity of the muscles, hepatitis and a robotization of their emotions and activity); and *sedatives* (which can lead to physical and emotional dependence, drowsiness, morning hangovers, and death from accidental or deliberate overdoses).

The moral of these homey illustrations is that any drug can be dangerous, depending on how much is used, how frequently, and with what degree of purity. Just as no drug is totally harmless, neither should any be labeled as uniformly and inevitably harmful. In Fort's formulation, we must think about drug use and abuse in multiple dimensions, considering the average dose compared to an excessive dose; the duration of drug action; the potential for dependence; the user's reasons for seeking the drug; the relation between long-term and short-term effects; the various concepts we employ, in the absence of drug use, to define normality and abnormality; and the best ways to regulate the different kinds of drugs and different kinds of users.

Of special importance are the concepts of "soft" drugs, "hard" drugs and the stepping stones that supposedly lie between them. In popular lore, as exemplified by *Hooked!*, a comic book now being distributed to youngsters by the National Institute of Mental Health and the U.S. Public Health Service, the older brother of the hero-victim has properly sounded the warning, "Eddie, I'm telling you . . . pot can lead you on to far more dangerous things." Sunk in adolescent depravity, Eddie answers, "Good! Anything's better than slaving your life away for nothing, like our old man did!" And, "a while later some guy showed us how to use 'H' . . . Heroin. We all started sniffing an' skin popping. It seemed like a real great kick for awhile. . . ." Until, finally, Eddie lies screaming, screaming, screaming for a shot he won't get. "It's torture, believe me!" he cries, and adds, "You know, some people call us junkies 'The Living Dead' . . . and I guess they're right."

Presumably, if we have absorbed the entire message from this tax-supported tract, a "soft" drug is one that is illegal (but readily available to back-alley, teenage gangs), gives the user such a feeling of "having a ball" that he has to drop out of school, and ultimately disappoints him so badly he corrupts himself permanently with a "hard" drug which destroys him through its (*a*) toxicity and (*b*) unavailability.

The actual practice, as Dr. Fort shows, is somewhat different, since people may move up and down or back and forth from "soft" to "hard" and back again, depending on the dimension of "hardness" used as a base line. Ninety-five to 100 per cent of addicts "used as their first potent mind-altering drugs alcohol and nicotine, both of them *illegally* in their early teens, with some of them later taking up marijuana and some who took up marijuana turning to heroin." If we wish to establish truth by sequence, he notes, we must seek a better common denominator than marijuana for all heroin users. An unbiased investigation would disclose that every present addict at one time in his life was dependent on milk, leaving us with no other recourse but to condemn mothers for giving them the original impetus that led to narcotics.

As to a concept of "hardness," Fort makes clear that all drug use can be dangerous but that primary villains depend on our attitudes rather than inherent properties in the various drugs. People may use a potentially "hard" drug, for example, in such a way that it never produces any hard effects on them. Heroin and other opiates are "hard" because they create addiction, or physical dependence, in ways similar to alcohol and barbiturate-sedatives. Yet heroin is "soft" because, unlike alcohol, it produces *no* permanent damage to the body even with decades of heavy use.

As for the relation of narcotics to crime, we know that drug users do commit anti-social acts (e.g., robbery, burglary, prostitution) to make sure that they have the drugs they want. To a majority of our public officials and editorial writers, these crimes prove that drug use is evil. To others, the real evil lies in government suppression of particular drugs that can then be obtained only by trafficking with criminals, and only after payment of higher prices than honest people can generally afford. Should we ask, "Would a heroin addict rob the neighborhood pharmacy at gunpoint if heroin were available on the same terms as Milltown or Jack Daniels?" While many people will insist, "Yes—because he's a bum," we should allow room for a more reasonable, contrary view. In summing up his chapter on hard drugs, crime and violence, Fort states:

> In all probability, sometimes mind-altering drugs, whether alcohol or others, will interact with a personality made prone to violence by social and psychological influences to precipitate or intensify violent behavior, while in other instances such a drug may well dampen the fires of violence through depressant actions, and reduce the likelihood of its being expressed antisocially.

The truth, dimly seen, is that we are what we are, bound to frustration if our greatest prospect for self-satisfaction is reliance on drugs for ourselves or, instead, on contempt for drugs, followed by punishment of all drug takers who seem to be having a better time than we are.

Fort's study gives added enforcement to the conclusion reached in Schur's *Our Criminal Society* that "crime in America will not be effectively reduced until we make basic changes in the structure and quality of American life." National goals of monetary success and comfortable living, based on wealth for all and special recognition for those whose adroit schemes reap great profits, will result in a working principle that, of all anti-social activity, the least excusable is remaining poor, the most impertinent is discrediting our current mythology.

Caveat Emptor

THE SELLING OF THE PRESIDENT. *By Joe McGinniss. Trident Press. 253 pp. $5.95.*

ROBERT MACNEIL
Mr. MacNeil is with the B.B.C. in London. He is the author of The People Machine *(Harper & Row).*

It is regrettable that Mr. McGinniss' book stops with the 1968 election. Readers may be lulled into thinking that the "selling" of Mr. Nixon ended with the inauguration. It did not. The men in charge of daily maintenance of Mr. Nixon's image in the White House are still hard at work constantly developing, retouching and trimming that image of the President which it is considered appropriate to project to the American public.

There is nothing essentially new in all this, any more than it is new these days for a Presidential candidate to mobilize the best resources of Madison Avenue to lubricate his journey to the White House. Presidents Kennedy and Johnson and their staffs often seemed to give as much thought to the image as to the accomplishments of their Presidencies. What is new with Mr. Nixon is the professional

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TIME

In the Book of the Revolutions of Souls
Which we are now writing,
Willing or not.

Tell me, declare the phantom
Of your heart. The gods
Are all equal.

Every night, climbing
Out of that nothingness
Into that nothingness.

HARVEY SHAPIRO

caliber of the image manipulators who surround and envelop his Presidency as they did his campaign. What is also new is that they have in Mr. Nixon a subject amenable to this treatment; a man who understands perhaps better than any major American politician today that it is image as much as substance which wins mass support, and that image is so readily manipulable.

What Mr. McGinniss saw in the campaign, White House correspondents now observe in the Presidency. With one hand, McGinniss says, his advisers were trying to build the illusion that Nixon considered communicating with the people one of the great joys of seeking the Presidency; while with the other they shielded him, controlled him and even the atmosphere around him. "It was as if they were building not a Presidency but an Astrodome, where the wind would never blow, the temperature never rise or fall, and the ball never bounce erratically on the artificial grass," McGinniss says. (The Astrodome image became piercingly apt for that Saturday afternoon, November 15, when Mr. Nixon sat insulated from the reality of at least 250,000 peace marchers within sight of the White House, while he watched the Ohio State-Purdue football game and studiously pretended that the demonstrators did not exist on his planet.)

McGinniss' book is fascinating on two levels: it offers a glimpse into previously undocumented aspects of the complex Nixon personality and it unmasks with devastating effect the professional amorality of those who people so much of the communications industry, their efficient dedication to the master of the moment.

McGinniss finds a great deal about Nixon and the "men in short hair and dark suits who always followed him around" offensive to his aesthetic and moral sensibilities. He has the clear eyes of a young man (McGinniss is 25) uncorroded by the years of martinis and professional anxieties that caused so many middle-aged men (like Norman Mailer) to see in Richard Nixon the prosaic savior of the nation. McGinniss finds in Nixon's character, "Something which craved regulation, which flourished best in the darkness, behind clichés, behind phalanxes of antiseptic advisers." Nixon "could breathe freely only inside a hotel suite that cost a hundred dollars a day."

> Let's face it, a lot of people think Nixon is dull. They think he's a bore, a pain in the ass. They look at him as the kind of kid who always carried a bookbag. Who was forty-two years old the day he was born. They figure other kids got footballs for Christmas, Nixon got a briefcase and loved it. He'd always have his homework done and he'd never let you copy.

These are the words of Roger Ailes, the TV director who staged Nixon's regional discussion programs. He and other advisers whom McGinniss interviewed had much to confide about their problems of eradicating the Nixon image.

> Now you put him on television, you've got a problem right away. He's a funny-looking guy. He looks like somebody hung him in a closet overnight and he jumps out in the morning with his suit all bunched up and starts running around saying, "I want to be President." I mean this is how he strikes some people. That's why I think these shows are important. To make them forget all that.

It is difficult to believe that such an inspired description was not heartfelt, was not the speaker's own view. If it was, if he despised the man so, why was he using all his professional skills to make Nixon President of the United States, *his* United States?

Far from the Great Liberal Conspiracy Mr. Agnew sees in the communications establishment, what is much nearer the truth and really alarming is the kind of moral indifference which McGinniss captures in his study of these men working for Nixon: the utterly detached view of thousands of men whose business is communicating with their fellow citizens but whose interest in the content of what they are communicating is what it might be if they were broadcasting into an ant hill.

The advertising and television people in McGinniss' book are almost prototypes: Ailes, the imperious young TV director; Frank Shakespeare, the former C.B.S. executive with simplistic right-wing views; and Harry Treleaven, the advertising man with a passion for artificial flowers. "There was an artificial flower shop on the way," McGinniss says. "He would stop, whenever he had time and browse tenderly, as one might in a bookstore. What impressed him most, he said, was how skillfully something artificial could be made."

This is not a scholarly or even a carefully researched work. It is simply a reporting job and a somewhat impressionistic one at that. "Politics, in a sense," Mr. McGinniss says, "has always been a con game." So, apparently, was the leg work for his book. Much of it reads as if the people in Nixon's campaign either did not know, or had forgotten, that McGinniss intended to write it all down and even publish it. Under whatever guise the material was obtained, it is a devastating case history of what the wedding of mass-consumer television and political ambition has achieved.

THEATRE

HAROLD CLURMAN

Ronald Ribman's three one-act plays collectively entitled *Passing Through Exotic Places* (Sheridan Square Playhouse) might have been called "The Sins and Sorrows of the Middle Class." The intention is good; so too is much of the writing. We have it on the evidence of his previous play, *Journey of the Fifth Horse*, that Ribman is a thoughtful dramatist. Yet in the present work there is a flaw which is fatal.

The first panel of the triptych contains an element of suspense which is sustained almost to its end but then disappoints. It opens at three in the morning with a smartly dressed character entering the home of a respectable married couple somewhere in the suburbs and being suspected of burglary. The householder, Charles Ferris, points a gun at the intruder and Mrs. Ferris insists that her husband call the police. Being a reasonable person, Ferris is willing to listen to the accused man, Sweeny, who assures Ferris that having drunk too much at a party he has entered the house by mistake—all the houses in the vicinity look alike. Ferris is convinced.

After a bit, however, it becomes evi-

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dent that Sweeny is lying. Once again he is threatened with arrest. Sweeny, cool and adept, begins telling another tale—more pathetic this time—about the reasons for his being so distraught. Ferris now not only believes Sweeny innocent but pitiable. Yet each time he relents Ferris discovers that he has been hoodwinked. The last of Sweeny's explanations is so heartrending—Ferris' natural compassion is enhanced by the fact that his own son was killed riding a motorcycle—that Ferris offers him a job in his business. But Sweeny is still lying.

Now Sweeny admits that he is a gambler, a crook, a high-wide-and-handsome criminal. What has made him so? He could believe in nothing after he had come back from the war in Vietnam. He is now bent on exploiting to the full such men as Ferris whose stupid lethargy made it possible for the war to happen. He taunts Ferris with a final challenge: "Why did your son kill himself on a motorcycle?" Ferris shoots Sweeny.

From this we are to understand that (*a*) the immorality of the younger generation is caused by the lack of real values in the older; and (*b*) that the latter, secretly disturbed by the accusation, retaliates in violence against the young.

But why, to begin with, does Sweeny keep on talking when he has several opportunities to walk out of the house unharmed? More important, since Sweeny has never at any point uttered anything but lies, why should we believe his final story, that he is a Vietnamese War veteran? And further—but wait: these faults are a symptom of something unacceptable in the basic premise throughout.

The second variation on the main theme takes place on a faraway island where the first white people to set foot are a man and a woman from the Peace Corps. When the play opens a young fellow, fresh out of college and just arrived to take up *his* Peace Corps duties on the island, encounters a well-dressed black sitting on the terrace of the property of Mr. Shawcross and his wife, who are about to leave for the States at the completion of their assignment.

The new arrival, middle-class, Jewish, is an idealist of the purest strain (in fact, he is something of an idiot), eager to bring the benefits of civilization to the underdeveloped region. The educated black warns him that the natives are content to be what and as they are. After the black disappears into the house, Mr. and Mrs. Shawcross appear. The man is depicted as an old-time Southern plantation overseer, and his wife as a bitchy flirt. They advise the newcomer that the feckless innocence and inferior minds of the natives impede their will to work so that the Shawcrosses have had to grow cotton by their own efforts: the natives did nothing but sit by and watch.

Then a ragged servant appears—the obsequious black of ancient myth—but he is none other than the educated fellow we saw at the opening, now in convenient disguise. Shawcross points to this cringing moron as an example to his "liberal" successor. When the Shawcrosses depart and the new man is left alone he hesitatingly begins to order the servant about somewhat in the Shawcross manner.

The symbolism (through stylization) is unmistakable. So much so that nothing is credible except as "symbol." The Peace Corps is equated with feeble white liberalism. Its representative desires to escape his Jewish and middle-class inferiority (or guilt) complex. Furthermore, blacks anywhere, everywhere abhor the aid of whites who insist on changing or "improving" them. They therefore fox their would-be benefactors when they do not kill them.

The last piece simply shows a poor Italian barber, ignorant, obtuse, racially prejudiced and stubborn—the lowest rung of the middle class—bemoaning the death of his son in the Vietnamese War. He grieves insanely over his past error in refusing to let his son go to college, but he will never change.

What is wrong in these plays is that they are based on assumptions that we are supposed to accept at face value because they have been pronounced axio-

TWO GREETINGS FOR THE END OF A DECADE

1. Christmas

What a blindness squinnied at the window.
All blear, the forsaken bay of snow gone blind, O
Blind in dusk. Zero, even zero, was lost
As I watched world's ghost sieved through world's ghost.
Sun, moon were comeless. Then in the blur
Of blind I saw a deeper blindness, the stir
Of void in void, and then a ripple-riddle
Of shadow no darker than the churn of petals
In the heart of white peonies. Still, taking, striking form
Until it stood in a sudden garden, a great white swan
Among snow and trees. This is the bird that must rise
From the cold seething of hope long gone.
But trust it: where it turns, there the true north lies.

2. New Year's Day

A few days more and I shall tear
The last sheet from a calendar
Whose pretty scenes, one by one—
A lenten rose in snow, Taos in sun,
The Golden Gate Bridge filtered from haze—
I crumpled and in their place
Stared into being a scene
Of snow on a raped girl's eyes, sunlight on a gun,
Ravines in Kentucky stuffed with rusting cars.
What scene now to end this calendar?

No bitter picture comes, only a story told
Me of a boy who found a not quite cold
Sparrow's egg on the black sill
Outside his window and taped it in his navel till
It hatched. I see him big boned, afraid,
As, giving up his sex, he watches, lying in bed,
The shell crack in that mother-place
Of his body. With him I gaze
Like a mother into the bare lizard face
That, crutched up on naked wings, stares
Back with the neutrality of survivors over the dinosaurs
From all history's bottomless calendar.

RADCLIFFE SQUIRES

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matic by the New Left en bloc. They are belied when they are presented in images none of which is in the least convincing in its own sphere. "Revolutionaries" have their own clichés no less empty than those of the flag-waving era. It is not that they are ideologically false but that they are arrived at mechanically, not lived through. They emerge as raw editorializing—sometimes cartoon clever—without self-supporting substance.

I have gone into so much detail in this instance because Ribman, among the better new dramatists, exemplifies what is their cardinal error: they too often write what they believe should be written, not what their experience enables them to write. Their work is well meant but generally factitious, "deserving" rather than sound.

Passing Through Exotic Places is well acted by Vincent Gardenia who has honesty and Italianate fire, by Robert Loggia who is forcefully direct and has a good sense of characterization, and by Tresa Hughes whose simplicity is always telling.

ART

LAWRENCE ALLOWAY

Photography has been credited with the destruction, or at least the outdating of, realist painting; the argument was usually the utilitarian one, *why do it by hand when the camera is quicker and more accurate*? When that came to seem not quite true, it was reckoned that the camera must, at least, have wiped out narrative painting. Thus television commercials took the place of genre painting. These crudely evolutionary views usually originated with the supporters of nonfigurative art, among them Malevich, and despite their pleasant simplicity are fallacious. The ideas suffer from a Marshall McLuhan kind of error which assumes that the addition of a new channel to society's switchboard precipitates Darwinian furor. In fact, the record of the 20th century is that switchboards grow and the number of channels increases; new channels do not drive out their predecessors like old apes. Since the absolute imitation of appearances is impossible, owing to differences in perception and to the problems of translating a three-dimensional world onto a two-dimensional surface, there can, in fact, be no contest.

The point is made evident in the exhibition, "Paintings from the Photo," at the Riverside Museum (310 Riverside Drive; through February 15). The show has as its subject the use of photographs by painters in the context of hand-done art. There are six artists (Harold Bruder, Richard Estes, Audrey Flack, Howard Kanowitz, Malcolm Morley, Joseph Raffael) with one omission that I regret (Richard Artswager) and one that I am grateful for (Lowell Nesbitt). Oriole Farb, director of the museum, has rightly excluded both collages of photographic bits and silk-screen paintings on which half-tone reproductions are printed on canvas (Rauschenberg and Warhol). Her theme is the incorporation of photographic sources into the textures of painting done, and subtly, by hand.

The photograph is the most direct code for objects and events that we have, and though it is true that the camera distorts and photographs lie, it has a particular evidential value. The visual cues of photographs are firmly ingrained in our perception as the most iconic form of representation. Iconicity means one-to-one relationship between signs and the objects they refer to; even the blurs and distortions of photography have come to resemble a texture of truth. Painters who use photographs as sources take possession not of a more truthful medium than their own but of another medium, with different conventions entirely. None of these artists is concerned with motion or aerial photography; they are using still photographs of high iconicity. Sometimes it is fidelity to subject matter that is operative, as in Bruder, but it can also be fidelity to the encoded forms of photography itself, with subject matter taking second place, as in Morley. Estes uses photography as an *aide-mémoire* to get his shiny urban surfaces right, and Kanowitz uses it to catch informal poses and simulates its grainy surfaces.

Harold Bruder paints indoor and outdoor subjects; in both he uses photos, but with opposed results. The landscapes with figures smaller than life are derived from numerous photos taken by the artist and used like a mosaic to build the painting. He takes advantage of the camera's power to arrest chance conjunctions of forms and makes these accidents suspenseful. Soft-edged, grayed, hazy, his outdoor scenes convey the scatter and inattentions of life delicately poised. He has successfully extended a subdued realist style in the direction of accidental grouping and gesture. In addition, there are greatly enlarged children's heads, but in these he has not found a way of drawing that can keep pace with the dilated photographic image. Joseph Raffael in his new paintings, however, has succeeded in blowing up photographic sources to a prodigious scale.

The four paintings by Raffael, done this year and last, are impressive and their originality might be indicated by reference to his earlier works. These usually consisted of details of people, animals, objects and landscapes, taken from magazines, each one isolated on the bright white canvas; the archipelago of images seemed linked, but in a buried way. This was, so to say, painting by clues, an array of inexplicit but coherent fragments. His new paintings are still photo-derived but his method of working is quite different: he represents objects, one at a time, in close-up, on large canvases. There is an irrational wholeness now about each huge and lustrous image. Three of the paintings are of the heads of works of art and Raffael turns the fancy, gift-book lighting of his sources into a dense radiance. At a time when paintings tend to be high-keyed transcriptions of the full range of light and shadow, he has adopted a wide scale of values from cloacal darks to feverish whites and made it work by sheer intensity and insistence.

Malcolm Morley is represented by paintings of the last four years, starting with a small oil sketch, 1965, for one of his ocean liner paintings, "Christopher Columbus" (the final work is also in the show). One of his first large figure compositions is here, "Ship's Dinner Party" of 1966 and, from this year, there are two new paintings. One is a portrait group, "Central Park," presumably taken from a commissioned photograph as were earlier portraits by Morley; and the other, "Chateau," is the first of a projected series of paintings of romantic architecture from postcards. Morley's handling of paint combines a dead-pan fidelity to his source and a certain extra juice that comes from the difference between paint and printer's ink. Also, Morley's hand intervenes and, even when feigning obedience, he has one of the most educated hands in the city. The difference of source and painting mounts as Morley's fidelity increases. A part of his strategy is not to take the dense painted image to the borders of the canvas; the white margin asserts the constituent substance of the canvas on which the image sits. (Edge-to-edge images that cover the whole canvas become more simply like their sources and lose some of the ambiguity that the margin supports.)

The trouble with Audrey Flack, compared to Morley, is the expedient way she uses photographs. She writes in the catalogue that they give her access to subjects about which she would otherwise be ignorant, but she shows no interest in the visual data of her sources. All she wants are the nuns in marches and Mexican workers as subjects; her transcriptions of the source photographs turn them into coarsely monochromatic naturalistic painting. In her most recent piece, "War Protest March," she has sharpened and intensified her touch, get-

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ting away from her usual loose drags and ridges of paint. She has stopped her image before hitting the edges and framed it by a narrow red-and-blue border, presumably as a result of the example of Morley's "Marine at Valley Forge."

There are two things that painters can do with photos in their work and here she has begun to do them. Photographic references both intensify illusion and affirm artificiality. This interplay of accurate reference and syntactic curiosity occurs because the camera provides both a direct record and a distorting one. It is the absorbing theme of this show that reality and artificiality are bound together in complexities that invalidate thoroughly the old forms of the art/photography discussion.

Howard Kanowitz is the only one in this show to be involved in all-out illusionism. His cut-out figures, grayed with the indeterminate tones of interior light, the same size as life, mingle obtrusively with visitors. Oriole Farb has the center section of last year's "The People" and it looks fine, at one moment fading into the crowd, the next moment slicing through it in a cutting edge of artifice. It is shown at the Riverside out in the open in a clear diffuse light. This direct presentation should be a lesson to the Waddell Gallery where Kanowitz shows and where his work is always grossly overdramatized. His new work is a series of painted cut-outs of college basketball stars done with a stunning illusionism that swings these under-life-size figures into zippy motion. The risk of quotation paintings from photographs, as you maintain the play of artifice and iconicity (part to the subject, part to the channel), is virtuosity and the risk is out in the open in Kanowitz, whereas Morley and Raffael avoid it. Raffael's "Judy and Me Dancing," for example, at the Riverside is a tour de force, but a tough not a showy one.

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FILMS

ROBERT HATCH

I never read Horace McCoy's novel, but I can remember the Depression and I can see that *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* must have been an acrid tract for those years. Unemployment was the pollution of Herbert Hoover's America, and it degraded people in grotesque and terrible ways. *They Shoot Horses*, which is the account of a dance marathon, is an example of what that degradation looked like.

What isn't clear to me, on the basis of the film adaptation, is how McCoy could have stretched this bitter anecdote to the length of a novel; there is not nearly enough material here for a movie. The characters are defined by their initial appearances, the situation is precisely what it appears to be, the comment is complete in the title. You know from the first moments that, over a period of several weeks, fifty or more couples will dance themselves into a torment of exhaustion for the mirage of "1,500 silver dollars," and for two hours you watch them do so. It is an appalling spectacle, but one that provides no development from its premises.

Faced thus with a tableau of catastrophe, I become uncomfortably aware of vself as gaping. My interest in these people is not solicited on any ground other than their desperation; it is like reading of trapped miners or running to the scene of an accident. The voyeur mood is engendered also because McCoy's story does not hit contemporary nerves. In this it fares less well than *Bonnie and Clyde* which, for all its period lithography, played variations on matters of identity and estrangement of which our own period knows its versions. The clammy terror of a whole nation gone broke has no contemporary parallels; we have not ended poverty, but we have driven it off the main avenues of our society (how we did that is another matter) and *Brother, Can You Spare a Dime?* is a song without echoes. Dance marathons staged for an audience obscenely comforted by the fact that it can afford two bits to watch people more miserable than itself is not part of our moral squalor. (It is true that the impresario of McCoy's bear pit takes great pains to maintain the credibility of his enterprise, but it would be straining, I think, to draw comparisons with the techniques of present-day government.)

Sydney Pollack, the director, brings the machinery of *They Shoot Horses* so excruciatingly to life that you can smell the sweaty dust of the ocean-side dance hall. His cameras are relentless in the too bright light of the too noisy ballroom, and the endurance grind becomes a hellish merry-go-round that is physically exhausting to watch.

The actors are also on their own particular merry-go-rounds, each assigned an identifying characteristic and told to display it whenever the action comes his way. And that becomes dramatically exhausting. The principals are Jane Fonda, Michael Sarrazin, Susannah York, Gig Young and Red Buttons, and again on a mechanical level, they are all admirably convincing—precisely what old files of *Life* will assure you they ought to be. However, there is a disconcerting aspect to their direction. Seen on the dance floor to be alarmingly near coma, they experience a kind of instant recuperation during their ten-minute rest periods whenever the plot gives them assignments to carry out. To be sure, the assignments are not very long or very complex, but it is startling to discover that these somnambulists can exchange crisp dialogue when the plot calls for it.

And I wonder whether McCoy made it plausible that a single dance contest should have been the occasion of a death by heart failure, two attacks of lunacy (one perhaps permanent) and a mercy killing (that bit about shooting horses). On the screen, the succession seems a little excessive, like the parade of disasters in a temperance pamphlet. The effect of horror—and dance marathons were authentically horrible—is weakened by the addition of melodrama. It relieves the coldness.

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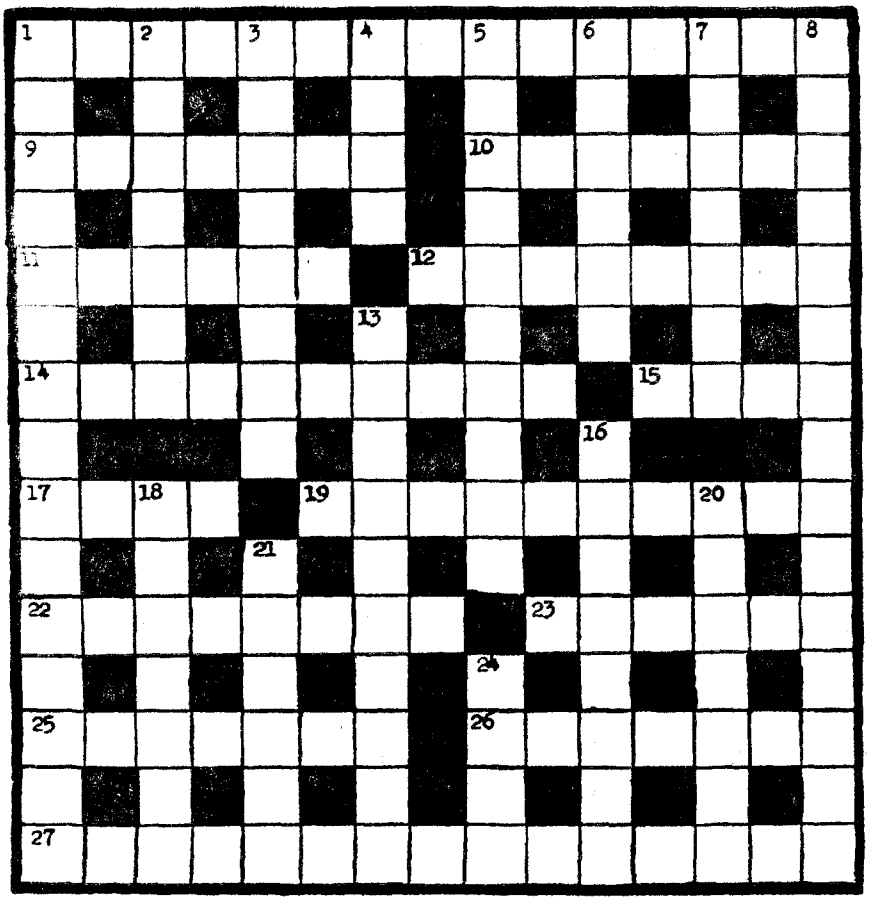
Crossword Puzzle No. 1327

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 Seeking to verify the story of what you might draw on? (8,7)
9 Straightens up and then relaxes a little? (7)
10 Increases the yen for a big roll, possibly. (7)
11 Pitched so as to make a naval-type color? (6)
12 And others just use the first three letters for it? (2,6)
14 Mary Foster pearls from one are unlikely. (6,4)
15 It's a place in Italy, obviously, or was in the Borgias' time. (4)
17 *Fundamentally a statesman?* (4)
19 Possible threat, most likely to affect your heating system? (10)
22 A good starting place to look for fish or fowl. (8)
23 City to run around in, particularly for a dramatist. (6)
25 Such sins are reminiscent of Portia's waiting-maid. (7)
26 Might prove a drain to Venezuela. (7)
27 You might find those engaged in it trying, in practice. (15)

DOWN

1 Take into consideration your altered appearance, as a sign of small business, perhaps. (5,4,6)
2 Boards made from the type around the outside of the tree. (7)
3 Maine flower, much shorter than 26. (8)
4 Fitting things like tables and trays might.
5 Do they indulge in other than strictly legal affairs? (10)
6 One may hand out parts useful for furniture on the coast. (6)
7 If one does, the wind-up might have to come later. (7)
8 Does it have selenographic features? (3,3,2,3,4)
13 See 24 down
16 Animal so wild as to be pictured as famous. (4,4)
18 Rock, perhaps, cut better than anyone else could do it! (7)
20 A place to stumble on an oil-gusher? (7)
21 Does he pursue one drink after another?
24 and 13 Real, as an obvious example. (4,2,3,5)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 1326

ACROSS: 1 Commensurable; 9 Naked; 10 Decollate; 11 and 12 Express purpose; 13 Peals; 14 Truncheon; 16 Reexamine; 18 Negev; 19 Rubbish; 21 Camphor; 22 Educators; 23 Delta; 24 Overexercised. DOWN: 1 Contemporaries; 2 Makepeace; 3 Endless; 4 Sides; 5 Recapture; 6 Baldric; 7 Erato; 8 Never-never land; 14 Thigh bone; 15 Eggshells; 17 Animate; 18 Nomadic; 20 Bruno; 21 Caste.

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